

Coltsville National  
Historical Park

# Your Park

A report prepared for the people of Hartford to brainstorm early ideas for the recently authorized Coltsville National Historical Park in Hartford, Connecticut in a collaboration between the National Park Service, the Van Alen Institute and Performing Parks.

2016



# From the National Park Service

## **Next Parks: Imagining the Future of Parks**

The National Park Service (NPS) and Van Alen Institute launched its partnership in 2008 through the highly acclaimed “Designing the Parks” initiative, a program to advance a framework for planning and designing public parks that are innovative, responsive, respectful, sustainable, and inclusive. The findings from this program led to a design competition led by the two organizations in 2012 called *Parks for the People: A Student Competition to Reimagine America’s National Parks*, an initiative to engage young people, especially students and young professionals, through design studios and competitions. The 2014 design competition *National Parks Now*, focusing specifically on four national parks in the northeast region, was a continuation of this partnership. The competition engaged emerging designers in innovative projects that further strengthen the national park visitor experience, the unique identity of each place, and create opportunities for public access, interpretive choice, inventive use of technology, and visitor-directed park activities.

*Next Parks: Imagining the Future of Parks* takes this collaboration one step further to push beyond preconceptions of what national parks – and any park or public space – can be, and to reimagine how these places shape and impact our everyday lives.

This initiative includes a series of stakeholder workshops focused on a new national park aimed at developing a range of design and engagement strategies to shape this park as well as future NPS sites. The park that serves as the point of focus for this project is Coltsville National Historical Park in Hartford, Connecticut. This park represents a 21st-century model that relies on managing the national park in partnership with nearby organizations, community groups, local governments, and others. Unlike traditional parks like Yellowstone, Acadia, and Yosemite, where the government owns the land and manages everything within its boundary, the NPS owns a limited amount of land at Coltsville. This positions NPS as a convener and coalition builder in collaboration with a range of public, private and non-profit organizations. These include partnerships and affiliations in conservation, preservation, recreation, interpretation, scientific investigation

and education at every level of civic engagement— each with a distinct role and complementary function to manage a park area. Such strong, ambitious park visions require new thinking and different stewardship models that fully represent the nation’s ethnically and culturally diverse communities.

NPS and Van Alen engaged a team called Performing Parks – a group of designers, educators, artists, anthropologists, and engagement specialists – to facilitate public engagement and develop ideas for innovative visitor experiences, partnerships, narratives, and places at the park, as well as strategies for connecting these elements to a broad, diverse audience. The multidisciplinary nature of this team provides multiple lenses through which the NPS, its potential partners, and the communities surrounding park sites can reimagine what parks can be, who uses them, and what they can do there.

### **Coltsville in Hartford, Connecticut**

Coltsville National Historical Park is a 260-acre site located in the Sheldon Charter Oak neighborhood of Hartford, CT. The Colt Firearms Complex was much more than a factory – the Colt family built out a small ‘company town’, including worker housing and eventually a church, Parish house, baseball field, and other landscape features. The vision for the complex was to provide for its workers’ every need, from shelter to spirituality to recreation. The Colt Company and other industrial companies provided work that made the area attractive to waves of ethnic groups including Polish, Irish, Italian, German, and Jewish immigrants. As the company’s importance and workforce increased, Coltsville eventually served as

the site of labor disputes and negotiations, leading to the formation of workers’ unions that became increasingly common throughout the twentieth century. Today, the neighborhoods surrounding Coltsville remain primarily working class or low-income, with predominantly Latino, West Indian, and African American populations.

In addition to bringing jobs and industry to the city of Hartford, the Colt Armory played a pivotal role in developing precision manufacturing, an approach that favored the production of interchangeable parts over the time-costly practice of individually crafting each piece. The company applied its interchangeable-parts techniques to a wide variety of consumer products and the Colt complex became an “incubator” facility for other inventors and entrepreneurs. This established Hartford as an industrial hub, attracting other entrepreneurs – from manufacturers of sewing machines, to typewriters, to bicycles and automobiles – to set up shop in the city.

The success of precision manufacturing spurred interest throughout the New England region, and, by the late 19th century, armories and other factories along the Connecticut River Valley from southern Vermont through Connecticut were adopting precision manufacturing as their modus operandi. The innovations in this region contributed greatly to the American Industrial Revolution, propelling the nation’s economic growth and poising it to become a world power. Precision manufacturing allowed Colt Firearms to produce at volume, and the company became a primary firearms supplier during America’s westward expansion efforts as well as the Civil War. After Samuel Colt passed away in 1862, his wife Elizabeth Colt took over the business and played a major role in

## From the National Park Service

further developing Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company and positioning the business for even greater success. The company attracted top design talent and began experimenting with a wider range of firearms products, from machine guns to automatic rifles to semi-automatic pistols. Under Elizabeth Colt's watch and beyond her death in 1901, the Colt brand became increasingly associated with innovation and variety as well as quality. Though still in operation today, the location of the Colt Factory was moved following Elizabeth Colt's passing, and the family's mansion, Armsmear, was transferred to Colt Trust, while 140 acres of the landed estate was donated to the city's parks department and became Colt Park. Coltsville National Historical Park plans to offer a window into both the technological and marketing innovations that spurred the success of the Colt Fire Arms Company, as well as a broader history of mass production and modern capitalism.

### **A National Historic Park at Coltsville**

Coltsville National Historical Park in Hartford, Connecticut was authorized by Congress in December, 2014. It was the result of nearly fifteen years of planning and advocacy led by a coalition of stakeholders committed to bringing national designation to the Coltsville Historic District. The legislation authorizing Coltsville specifically mentions providing visitor services for the Colt Armory, Church of the Good Shepherd, Caldwell / Colt Memorial Parish House, Colt Park, Potsdam Cottages, Armsmear and the James Colt House. However, the park is also envisioned as a "partnership park," and the National Park Service will work both within and beyond these buildings and boundaries through

programming collaborations with institutional and community partners at local, regional, and national scales.

The legislation that the Congress passed and the President signed only "authorized" Coltsville National Historical Park. The authorizing legislation identifies "Conditions for Establishment" necessary for park establishment. Several tasks have already been accomplished but the remaining steps include:

Agreement with the City of Hartford to ensure that public property, primarily Colt Park, is managed consistent with its new status as a national park and that Hartford historic preservation regulations work to protect historic resources associated with Coltsville.

Agreement with Colt Gateway LLC (Owners of the historic Colt Armory) to secure the donation of at least 10,000 square feet of space for a visitor center. Transfer of property and buildings to the National Park Service for the visitor center.

Beyond park "establishment", there is the complex work of developing a vision for this new unit of the National Park Service. This report represents the very 'beginning of a beginning' of this process. The stories, ideas, and recommendations laid out in the following pages are drawn from a range of perspectives offered by the participants of two day-long workshops in November and December 2015. The ideas are intended to inspire further dialogue and collaboration between Coltsville National Historical Park and its future local, regional, and national partners.



# Performing Parks

The name of our team, ‘Performing Parks,’ grew from a discussion about the ways in which American parks and their idyllic landscapes tend to endorse a singular narrative. Our team seeks to activate cultural landscapes through performances that allow for the interplay of layered narratives. Treating parks as stages, we invite visitors to enact personal, local, and future narratives. Coltsville National Historical Park is rich with narratives that encompass cultural landscapes from the colonial to the industrial, the urban to the bucolic, and include dynamic natural systems, which provide unique opportunities to engage diverse stakeholders. When thinking about establishing a new type of national park in a vibrant urban setting like Hartford, CT, it was important to re-imagine ways of identifying stakeholders and engaging visitors in the creation of new National Parks.

Rather than designing park structures or buildings, we are engaged in applying design thinking and research to involve you, the park user and visitor, in imagining Coltsville National Historical Park.

The Performing Parks team was selected

by the Van Alen Institute and the National Park Service, and is composed of Quilian Riano, Adeola Enigbokan, Annie Barrett, Greg Mihalko, Joyce Hwang and Sukjong Hong. Together, the team have experience in architecture, community engagement, art, oral history, journalism, social sciences, urbanism, graphic design, and academia. We came together out of a belief that a transdisciplinary approach and a more engaged model of practice can help create the frameworks for our public institutions to rethink established processes.

Design research methods value iteration and ongoing processes over final products. For Coltsville National Historical Park we used several methods, including: community mapping, focus group discussions, and oral history collection, to help identify the themes and priorities important to local stakeholders. Moving forward we recommend that the NPS continues to engage transdisciplinary teams to help in the development of a robust process for the development of Coltsville.

For more information about team members, bios are located at the end of this report.



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# Introduction

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How do you create a new kind of national park in an urban context? This was among the questions asked by the Performing Parks team when the National Park Service and Van Alen Institute asked to create engagement activities with the residents and stakeholders around the newly-formed Coltsville National Historical Park. Establishing this new park represents an opportunity to involve partners in managing the park and in bringing a broad range of narratives and programming to various audiences. Located in the neighborhood of Sheldon Charter Oak, in Hartford, Connecticut, Coltsville National Historical Park also represents a unique opportunity to reimagine urban and historic industrial sites as spaces of national, regional, and local significance.

The goal of the workshops and the analysis that follows is to document and understand the stories and experiences of local individuals and groups who have a stake in the future of Coltsville. Given the short engagement period that led to this report, it identifies initial themes and topics that an ongoing process can learn from and develop further.

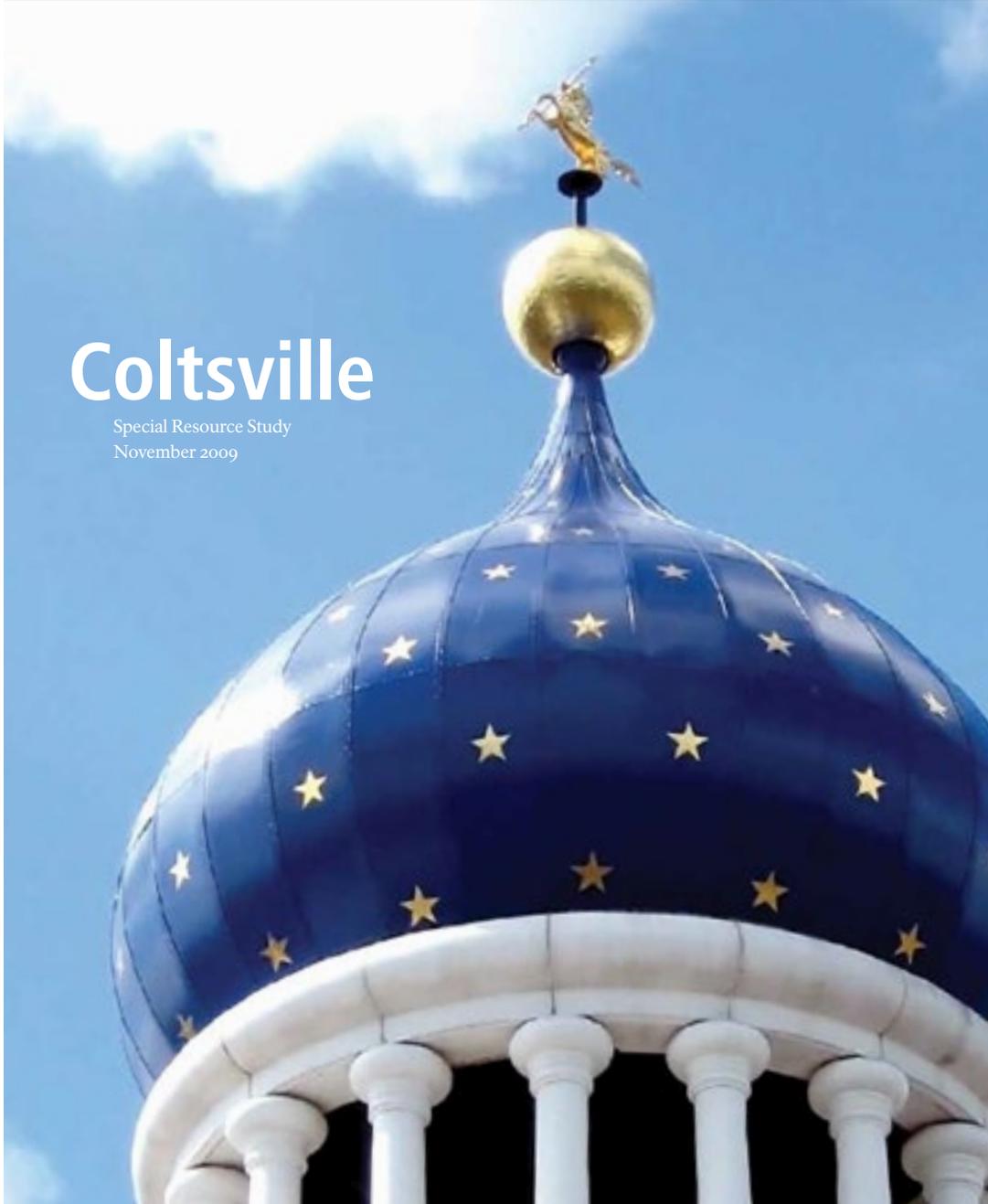
This introductory section describes the context as well as the methodology the team used to develop engagement processes that can lead to a new kind of park and visitor engagement.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

# Coltsville

Special Resource Study  
November 2009



Cover of Coltsville  
Special Resource  
Study

# Coltsville is Your Park

By titling this report ‘Your Park,’ we are extending an invitation to you — interested parties from local Hartford neighborhoods as well as regional and national stakeholders — to participate in the exciting process of establishing Coltsville National Historical Park. Many people and institutions in Hartford and beyond have already contributed their time, energy and skills to help formally establish Coltsville National Historical Park, but to make the park a reality, it will require your passion, participation, and vision.

In order for this park to develop its local, regional, and national narratives and experiences, many voices and perspectives will have to be heard. The aim of this report is to begin a process to do just that. The workshop process asked participants to share their visions for the park. Then, together we discussed different thematic priorities and created maps highlighting places of opportunity and potential stakeholders to reach out to as new spaces and programs are designed

at Coltsville National Park.

We make no claims to any kind of final conclusions within this report. Instead, we propose some initial ideas and questions, as well as a model for local, regional and national stakeholders to use for ongoing conversations that will lead to action. In short, we propose a process that will make this new national park yours.

This process is also about highlighting overarching questions about creating a meaningful place – Is there a park or historical site that you like to visit? What makes you feel connected to that park or site? What elements help you to feel that connection?

Finally, the invitation remains open – would you like to actively participate in a process to identify and engage the people, places, and stories that will shape Coltsville National Historical Park? **Let’s start making Your Park -- which through conversation and actions will become a park for all of us.**



# Local Context



→  
Workers at the  
East Colt Armory

For the Performing Parks team, local engagement and ongoing community participation is a key part of our working principles and process. Understanding local histories, needs, and interests is essential to moving forward on plans that are actionable and have community buy-in and commitment. Furthermore, a process that understands local issues has the opportunity to ground the park as it seeks to find a regional and national audience.

Coltsville National Historical Park is located in the historic Sheldon Charter Oak neighborhood of Hartford. Residents and organizations from Sheldon Charter Oak, Barry Square, and Frogtown, among others, participated in the two workshops we held with the National Park Service and Van Alen Institute. Adjacent Hartford neighborhoods, including South Green, Downtown, Barry Square, and South Meadows, as well as communities across



the river, can also be considered part of the locality of the historical park.

A local process of engagement should be supplemented with a process that draws out the regional and national histories and potential of the sites that encompass the park.

←  
Cultural and  
Historical Map of  
Hartford, 1933





## Introduction



→  
Aerial view  
of Coltsville  
National  
Historical Park



**Public Workshop #1**



**Evaluation**

**Research**

**Outreach**

National Park Service  
+ Van Alen Institute  
+ Performing Parks



**Public Workshop #2**



**Reflection**

**Documentation**

**Planning**

National Park Service  
+ Van Alen Institute  
+ Performing Parks



**Coltsville Report**

# Methodology

The primary methods of research for this report centered on structured group discussions, site surveys, community mapping, and analysis of participant stories.

## **Direct Engagement and Site Surveys**

The primary engagements with local participants were two half-day workshops with knowledgeable members of the Hartford and greater Connecticut communities, mostly representing local non-governmental organizations, cultural and education institutions, (like local universities) led and co-planned by NPS, Van Alen Institute, and the Performing Parks team.

Van Alen and a few members of the Performing Parks team also conducted a pre-workshop site visit to the proposed Coltsville area, guided by NPS staff.

## **Evaluation & Research & Planning**

- One day-long session evaluating the first workshop and planning the second, with NPS, Van Alen and the Performing Parks team;
- Additional information-gathering phone conversations with Van Alen and NPS;
- Review of background materials about Partnership Parks and Coltsville provided by NPS
- Online research and brief phone interviews conducted by the Performing Parks team to learn more about issues of historical and geographical relevance to Hartford and Coltsville

The schedule of the first workshop was set by Van Alen and NPS, and the second workshop's schedule was determined through discussions with Performing Parks, Van Alen, and NPS.

## **Participant Selection and Outreach**

The attendees of the first workshop were invited prior to the selection of Performing Parks team by NPS and Van Alen.

The attendees of the second workshop were expanded via a snowball method—through the suggestions of participants in the first workshop and further outreach to community leaders after the first workshop. (The full list of participants can be seen at the end of this document).

## **Documentation & Analysis**

The Performing Parks team applied visual and spatial analysis through the analysis of objects brought by participants and the stories shared about them, and through a community mapping activity that identified and mapped key spatial stories relevant to Coltsville National Historical Park and to Hartford.

Through narrative and textual analysis of the stories and memories shared by participants in both workshops, the team identified specific recurring themes related to Coltsville National Historical Park.

Photos, audio recordings, notes, and maps created by participants helped to document and aid in the reflection process.



# Workshops

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Our findings and recommendations are based on two half-day workshops conducted with stakeholders of Coltsville National Historical Park in November and December of 2015. The two workshops were designed to:

- Generate ideas for partnerships and potential stakeholders;
- Highlight connections between historical and contemporary narratives;
- Begin conversations about future engagements with a broader range of stakeholders.

What follows is a brief description of the activities in which stakeholders participated.



# People, Places and Stories

**Partners = People**  
**Resources = Places**  
**Interpretations = Stories**

As we conducted our research, three key National Park Service terms emerged as particularly important to clarify.

Partners are the critical people and communities who can shape a vision for the park and ensure its success.

Resources are both tangible and intangible assets and values.

Interpretation, especially in our current climate of audience-centered engagement, is the set of questions that we ask about ourselves and our past in order to shape our collective future.

The Performing Parks team decided to borrow and translate these terms for a community engagement process.

Thus, partnership becomes thinking about **PEOPLE** in the local and regional area that will benefit the most from the establishment of a national park

Resource becomes the **PLACES** that the NPS can interact and collaborate with.

Interpretation becomes the **STORIES**—past and present — that stakeholders think are most important.

By engaging with important NPS terminology, we intend to show how any participant can be part of envisioning what people, places and stories are critical to Coltsville National Historical Park.



← Steve Thornton of the Shoeleather History Project shares the labor organizing history of the neighborhood.



← Jack Hale of Church of Good Shepherd (center) talks about various community activities.

#1 —

November 16, 2015

**What and who is Hartford?**

**What is the role of a national historical park?**

**What makes an experience memorable?**

**What audiences and histories should Coltsville connect to?**

The first workshop asked participants a series of open-ended questions to connect Coltsville National Historical Park to narratives about the city of Hartford and the broader region. This workshop was facilitated by the Van Alen Institute and the National Park Service.

The first set of small group discussions tackled the questions: what or who is Hartford? What is the role of a National Park? What makes an experience memorable?

Afterwards, knowledgeable members of the Hartford and greater Connecticut community led workshop participants on brief tours of several key sites and areas in the park vicinity, ranging from the Colt Armory to Colt Park to the Parish House of the Church of the Good Shepherd as well as a brief history of the public housing and labor history of Colt and other industrial factory workers.

In the second set of small group discussions, participants discussed: What audiences could Coltsville connect to? How would the park engage those audiences? How does the history of Coltsville connect to regional and national narratives? Through the discussions, overarching themes emerged, which became the basis for further discussion in the subsequent workshop. Participants also generated ideas and submitted names and institutions to include a broader range of stakeholders and partners at the second workshop.

The broad themes that emerged from the first workshop were:

- Neighborhood Identity
- Education
- Infrastructure
- Innovation
- Recreation
- Perceptions of Crime



←  
The small group focused on Neighborhood Identity of Sheldon Charter Oaks takes a closer look at the neighborhood.

↓  
Participants share headlines of their vision of a future Coltsville.



# #2 —

# December 7, 2015

## **What are the people, places and stories of Coltsville National Historic Park?**

The second workshop aimed to delve deeper in the people, places, and stories that emerged from the first workshop through text-based activities, community mapping, and object-based storytelling. This workshop was planned and facilitated by the Performing Parks team.

### **Headlines from the Future**

Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to write or sketch one or more possible future newspaper headlines about Coltsville National Historical Park. For the first workshop activity, participants shared these stories, which expressed multiple visions for the future. Then, as a collective activity, the headlines were grouped under the themes that emerged from the first workshop as well as new themes that came from the headlines, such as Recreation and Infrastructure.

### **Community Mapping by Themes**

This was followed by a two-part mapping activity that engaged participants in group discussions to talk about the sites and stories that related to their chosen themes. The discussions from this mapping activity are developed in further detail in the following pages, under the Themes heading.

### **Object Stories**

Finally, an object “auction” invited participants to display and comment on personal objects and artifacts related to Coltsville that they had brought to the workshop. This final activity sparked a more open-ended range of stories about key people and narratives that could be part of the future national park at Coltsville.



↑  
Participants view contributions of objects brought by others and discuss their meaning and significance.

←  
Community baseball and Hartford article about baseball  
Written caption by participant:  
"Hartford Coltsville Historic Sports Tour"

←  
Local graffiti:  
"Give 'em a jolt with a Colt!" - on the side of a Colt building.

Caption by a participant:  
"Jolt Hartford with jobs for residents."

# Object Stories

## What object do you associate with Coltsville National Historical Park and the surrounding area?

For the second workshop, participants were asked to bring in any object that they associated with the Coltsville National Historical Park or surrounding area, including, but not limited to, photographs, historical artifacts, or family mementos. These artifacts were exhibited on tables with accompanying labels written by participants.

Throughout the course of the workshop, other participants were invited to leave comments and questions next to the objects they were curious about or had different associations with.

The activity allowed participants to express their own unique understanding of the concept and potential of Coltsville, the surrounding Sheldon-Charter Oak neighborhood, and of Hartford as a whole.

Object Stories was devised to provide an open-ended space for interaction between participants, in order to tease out stories and ideas that might have otherwise gone unremarked upon or unacknowledged during the workshop. The activity drew on qualitative social science research methods, including focus groups, journaling, and biography.

**The following recorded comments are participants' ideas and reflections, based upon viewing objects related to Coltsville National Historical Park and the local area.**

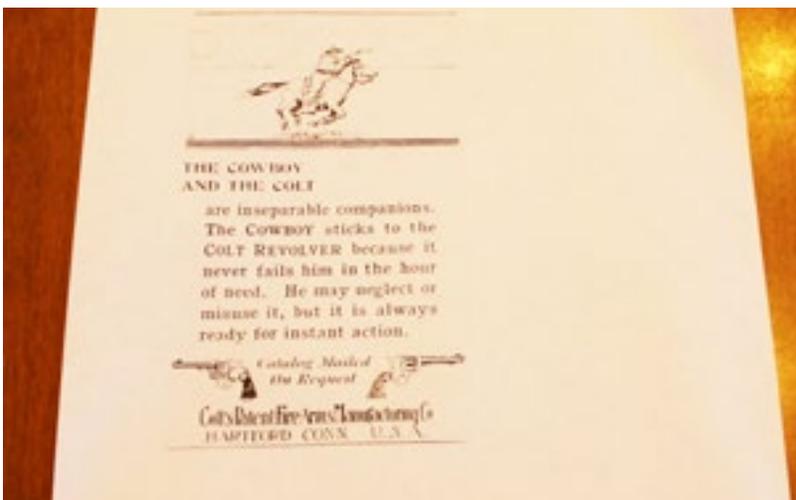
Object Stories



← Charter Oak box, family heirloom, c.1850s

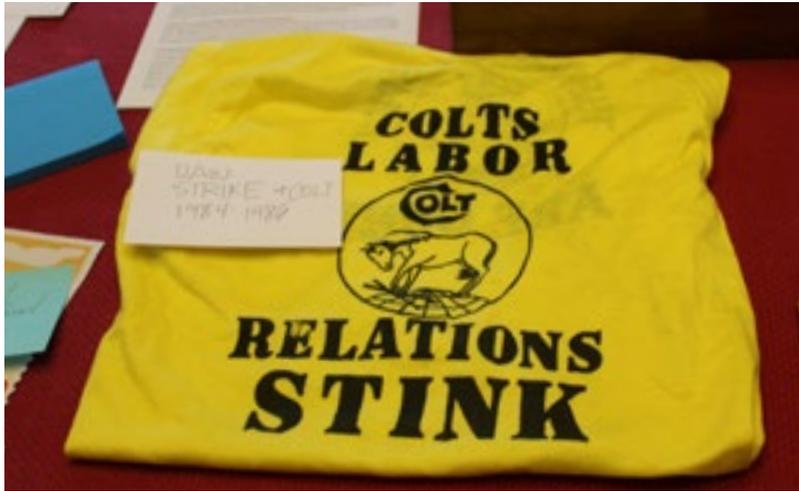
“The Charter Oak image and story...over the centuries has been more widely associated with this place than even Colt, or really almost anything... The way the Colts used it... for them it was about politics... and also about civic identity. So it touches on a lot of cool things.”

“Even though he is very tied to Hartford, Colt and those guns are embraced in the Western region to the extent that Arizona in 2011 made the Colt their state gun...that’s how attached they are.”

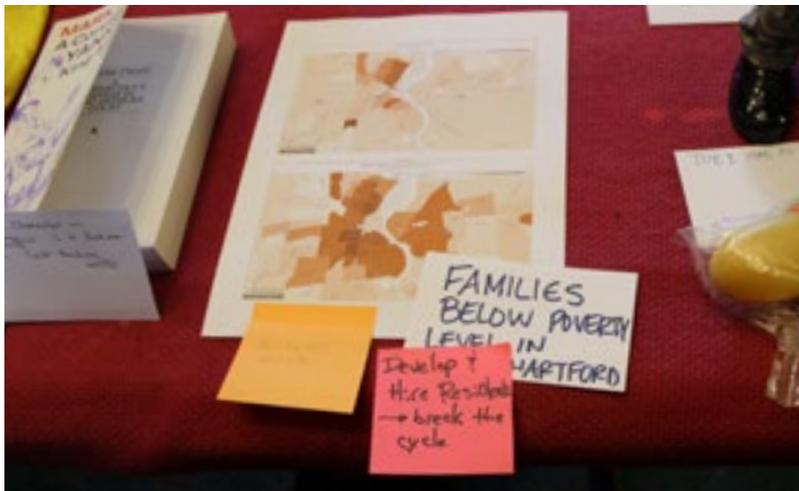


↑ Comment from a participant

← Ads for Western expansion which feature the Colt gun “The Cowboy and the Colt”



←  
Union supporters  
T-shirt, United Auto  
Workers Strike, Colt  
Factory 1984-1989



←  
“Families living below  
the poverty line in  
Hartford” Infographic  
  
↓  
Participant in re-  
sponse to infographic  
chart

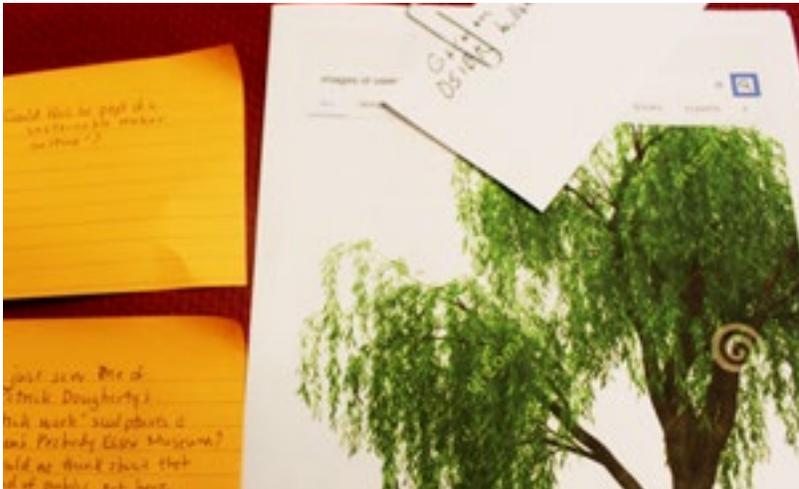
“I think about the tax base, and what I see is that who comes to Coltsville should try to enhance, if you will, the tax base and the community around it, because they are the ones who feed into it from an economic sense, and from a day-to-day sense. I think that yes, we want to attract outsiders, and we want to attract tourists, but...the most important thing to me is that the site, and the visitation of the site, sees these people, these [local] families, inside the site.”

## Object Stories



←

A children's toy similar to the one the participant had growing up in Nigeria that symbolized American culture & made participant want to join the military as a child.



←

German Osier Willow Tree.

↓

Comments and ideas from participants about the representation of the willow tree and the industries it brought forth.

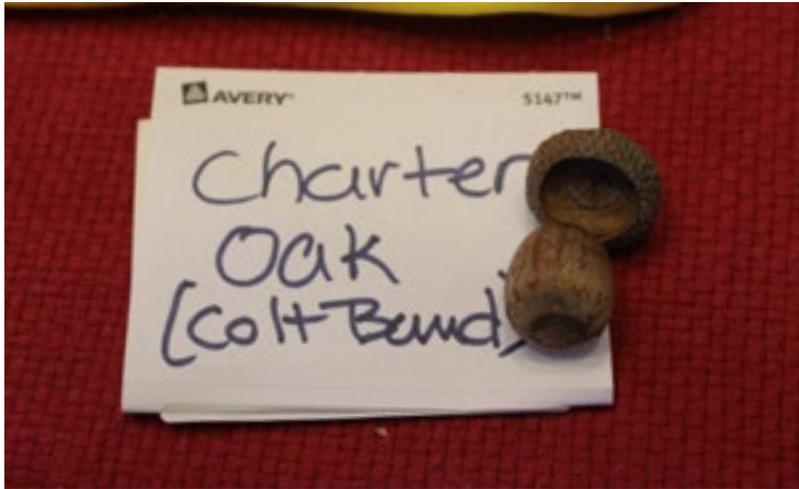


**“I had not been aware of the willow industry. The Hartford art school was founded so that it was practical skills for women... so there’s this thread of industry, practicality, increasing the level of living for people of Hartford. There’s a new grad program that’s going to be contributing a public artwork for Hartford every year. One of the people I want to bring in is a willow artist... This is an amazing connection.”**

**“Could this be part of a sustainable maker culture?”**

**“Could we think about that kind of public art here?”**





←  
Seeds of the Charter  
Oak

“I was taken by the constellation of cultural objects that were formed from natural objects...such as the charter oak...or the dike where the willows are...they could be a model of creativity, and, I think, sustainability too.”



←  
Artwork by Katherine Dewakuku--Hopi First Mesa, Walpi Arizona, 2005

↓  
Discussion by three participants about the significance of Charter Oak to Native American communities.

“The Charter Oak, prior to European colonization, was of significance to Native Americans in the area...”

“And it signaled betrayal too!”

“The Indians believed that when the leaves on the tree were the size of a mouse’s ears, that was the sign to plant the corn. That was the significance of that Charter Oak tree.”



# Headlines from the Future

Prior to the second workshop, participants were asked to write or sketch one or more possible future newspaper headlines about Coltsville National Historical Park. For the first workshop activity, participants shared these stories, which expressed multiple visions for the future. Then, as

a collective activity, the headlines were grouped under the themes that emerged from the first workshop as well as new themes that came from the headlines, such as Recreation and Infrastructure. The following are all of the contributed headlines.

NEW YORK TIMES

WEDNESDAY, 14, 2022

## MANUFACTURING RETURNS TO COLTSVILLE, CONN.

Manufacturing center opens assembly plant in historic Colt works to produce for revolutionary anti-ballistic force field generators



# Infrastructure ↓

Samuel Colt Memorial in Colt Park  
undergoes restoration

## COLTS & QUILTS

Connecting Hartford's green space thru  
Urban Design... the addition of Colt  
National Park

COLT PARK RESTORED  
TO ORIGINAL PLANS  
-> NEW COLT MUSEUM

Historic Colt  
Park Buildings  
Restored,  
Reopened

City Park Service February 2011



# Crime and Perception of Crime ↓

Coltsville NHP:  
A Complicated Story of  
Industrial America Explored +  
Revisited

Pope Francis, President  
Sanders and NRA  
President Convene in  
Hartford for Gun  
Violence Summit

Thoughtful Public Debate on  
the Role of Fireman in  
American Culture at Coltsville  
NHP: Implied Legislation to  
Propose Effective Gun Control Through  
Legislation

CONTINUE:  
CENTER FOR  
EDUCATION +  
GUN SAFETY

## ONLY PATENT FIREARMS INVENTS FUTURISTIC SMART GUN

THIS HANDDOWN OF THE FUTURE WILL BE ONE  
THAT CAN ONLY BE FIRED BY ITS OWNER.

USING BIOMETRIC SENSORS THIS WEAPON WILL  
ONLY RECOGNIZE THIS FINGERPRINTS OF THE OWNER.

THIS WILL ELIMINATE USE BY UNAUTHORIZED  
INDIVIDUALS, SUCH AS CHILDREN, THOSE WHO  
MIGHT STEAL A GUN AND USE IT FOR CRIMINAL  
ACTIVITY, OR PREVENT POLICE OFFICERS FROM  
HAVING THEIR SERVICE WEAPONS TAKEN AWAY  
AND USED AGAINST THEM.

LET US ENACT THE MOST EFFECTIVE POLICE OF THE 21ST  
AND 22ND CENTURIES AS A CONSEQUENCE OF A  
PATENTABLE AND EFFECTIVE GUN IN THE PROTECTION  
OF OUR RIGHTS. (A CONCEPT WHICH IS THE RESULT  
OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION)

# Local Context and Identity ↓

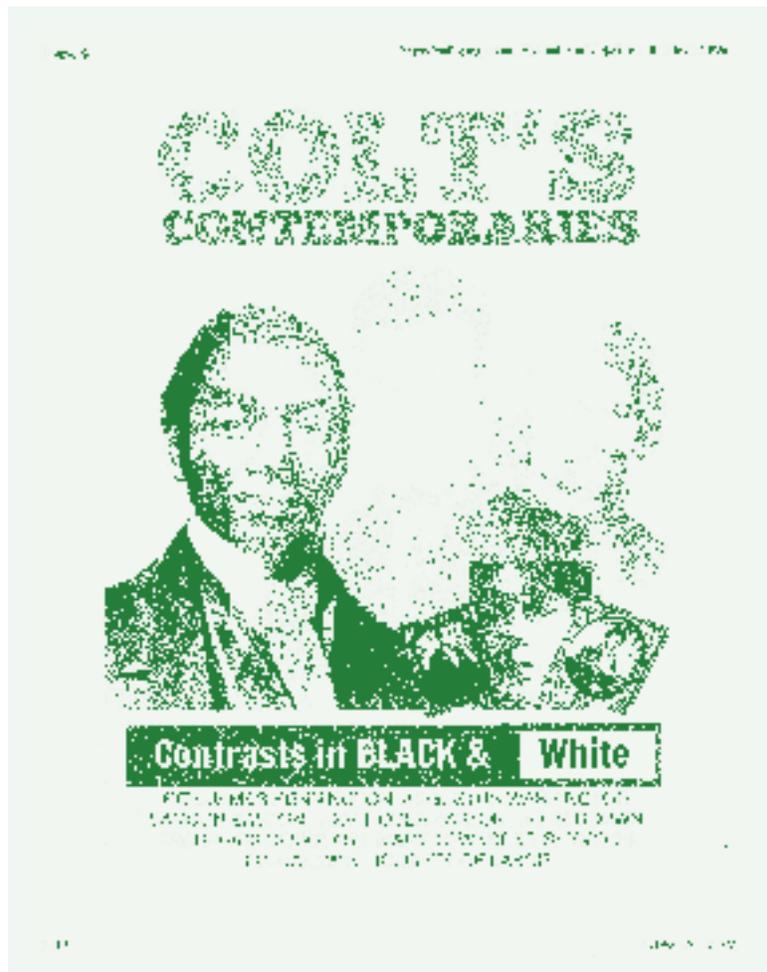
COLTSVILLE WORKS  
W/ LOCAL ARTISTS  
+ PUBLIC ART

Local artists and contractors will be featured in an art sculpture of the 1900s

Too many rules  
without taking it  
down: the local  
community needs  
+ uses

Celebrate Elizabeth Jarvis Colt's  
Birthday

1844-1927 1907-1



### COLTSVILLE's Revolving Legacy

- Entrepreneurship, marketing & capitalization
- Economic growth & stimulation
- Continued learning & innovation
- Community building & quality of life enhancement
- Environmental stewardship & sustainability
- Horticulture & landscape beautification



Communities Thrive  
around Coltsville

DATE

Elizabeth And Sam Deforus To Coltsville Today

1000 South 10th Street, Coltsville, WI 53515. Model #  
 1000 Coltsville, WI 53515. Model # 1000 Coltsville, WI 53515.  
 2000 Coltsville, WI 53515. Model # 2000 Coltsville, WI 53515.

COLTSVILLE-REVIVED  
 THE GOLDEN AGE OF  
 HARTFORD  
 IN THE SHELDON CHAMBER  
 OAK NEIGHBORHOOD



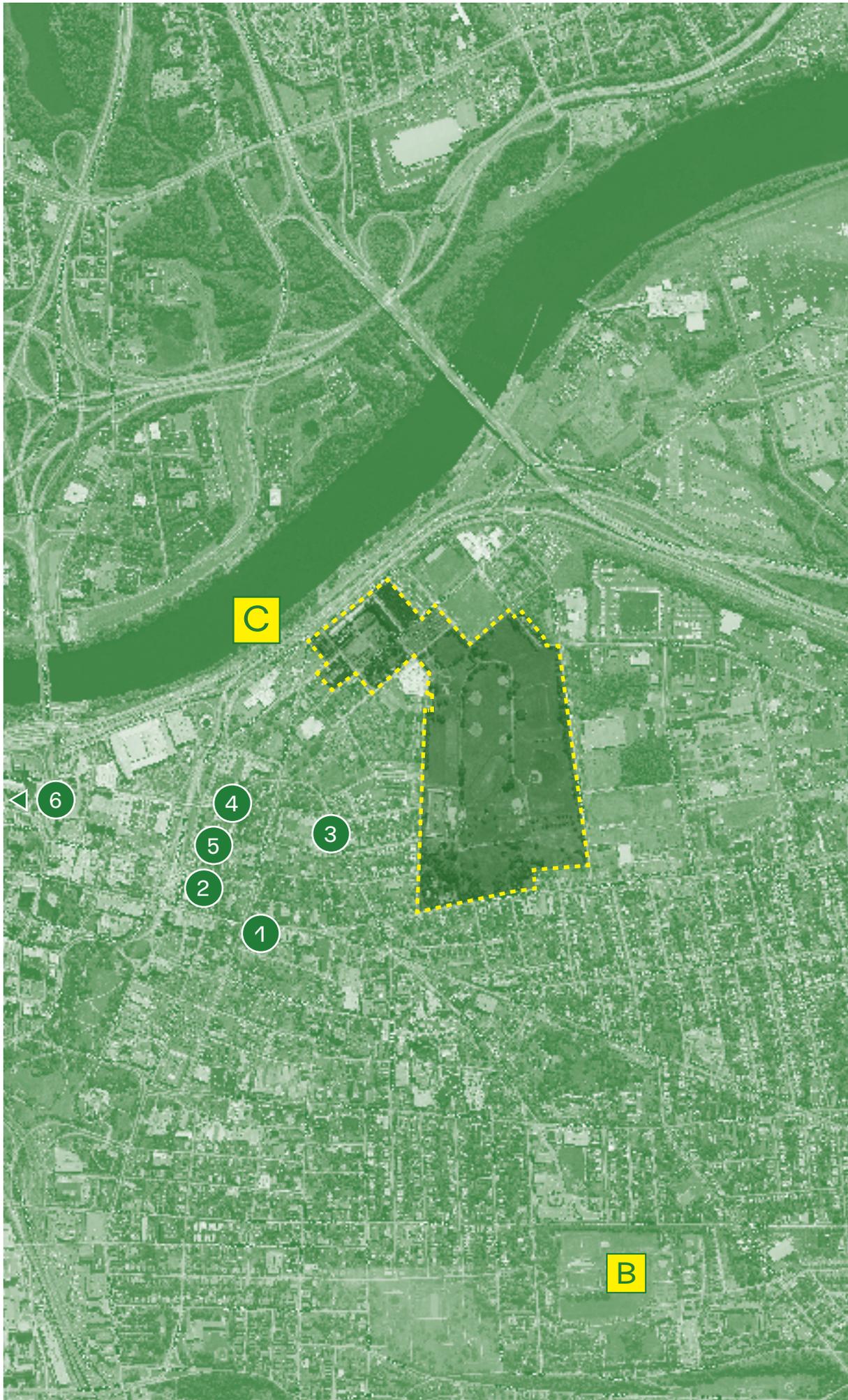
# Themes

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The results of the community workshops were a series of maps identifying the people, places and stories that can help as the process to create the Coltsville Historical Partnership Park continues. The following pages will show how the stories that local stakeholders shared during workshops can be turned into specific programs and projects that with further development can benefit both the larger local community and the park as it sees increased attendance.

Based on each person's headline (pp. 35–41), participants discussed and were grouped together by the following themes:

- Neighborhood Identity
- Education
- Infrastructure
- Innovation
- Recreation
- Perceptions of Crime



Places ↓

- 1 Old Temple Beth Israel, now the Charter Oak Cultural Center
- 2 Charter Oak Place (site of original 'Charter Oak')
- 3 The Capewell Horsenail Manufacturing Company
- 4 Polish National Home
- 5 Dr. Ramon E. Betances School
- 6 The Talcott Street Church



# Neighborhood Identity

**People** ↓

Carol Coburn  
Coltsville Heritage Partnership

Bernadine Silvers  
Coalition to Strengthen Sheldon Charter Oak Neighborhood, Metro Hartford Alliance

Lynn Ferrari  
Coalition to Strengthen the Sheldon Charter Oak Neighborhood

Steve Thornton  
The Shoeleather History Project



Amanda Baker  
Real Art Ways

Chloe Taft  
Yale University

Bill Hosley  
Terra Firma Northeast

Adeola Enigbokan,  
Facilitator  
Performing Parks



**Summary** ↓

The neighborhood identity group in the workshop was primarily composed of residents from the Sheldon Charter Oak neighborhood. Sheldon Charter Oak is Hartford’s oldest neighborhood, home to a committed group of residents and partners who are concerned about the neighborhood’s identity and future. The neighborhood’s rich past encompasses histories of early Native American and colonial settlement in the area, abolitionist movements, religious freedom and tolerance movements, sites of industry and labor organizing, the beginnings of baseball, and post-World War II experiments in public housing and school integration.

**Key Stakeholders** ↓

## Friends of Colt Park

**Stories** ↓



## Misconceptions

“We have one of the lowest crime rates in the city, and we’re one of the poorest neighborhoods in Hartford. What this says is that crime and poverty do not necessarily go together.”  
— Bernadine Silvers



## Institutional connections

“When I was at Trinity College, we could come into Hartford for sports events, and there was this perception that if you left the college, something terrible was going to happen to you. So we would come in on the bus, and go back to campus, and I never saw anything of the city. The institution had a reputation for isolating itself from the surrounding community, and it seems there are a lot of institutions like that in Hartford.”  
— Chloe Taft



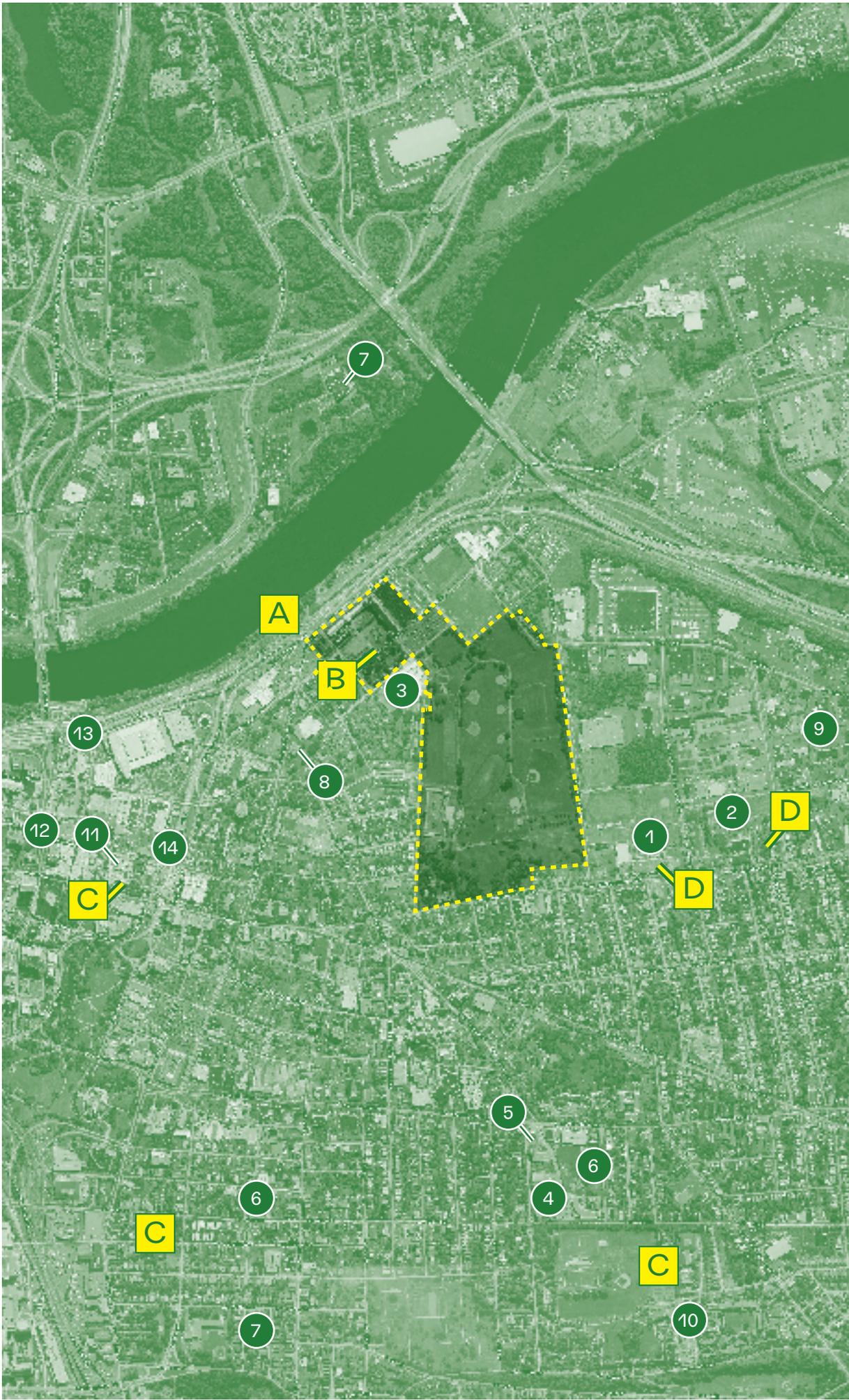
## Cross the river

“There is a really bad perception of Hartford as a very dangerous city, but the crime really is localized in particular areas yet people outside are afraid to come. I always hear ‘I’m not crossing the river,’ and they’re missing out on art, architecture, culture, and world class museums.”  
— Carol Coburn



## Untapped historic sites

“There are a lot of pockets in Hartford with great historic sites, but in this city we ignore them, instead of developing and capitalizing on them. This is why it is so important for Coltsville to come into fruition. I hope I live long enough to see it.”  
— Bernadine Silvers



**Places ↓**

- 1 Bulkeley High School
- 2 Burr School
- 3 Richard J. Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts
- 4 Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy
- 5 Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts High School
- 6 Montessori Magnet School
- 7 Two Rivers Magnet Middle School
- 8 CREC Main Offices
- 9 High Road School
- 10 Trinity College
- 11 Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
- 12 Connecticut Old State House
- 13 Connecticut Science Center
- 14 Hartford Public Library



# Education

**People** ↓

Carol Padberg  
Hartford Art School

Ken O'Brien  
Kinsella Magnet School

Beth Taylor  
University of Connecticut

James Golden  
Mark Twain House

Sally Whipple  
Connecticut Old State House

James Woolsey  
NPS Coltsville



Eugene Green

Joanne Gangi-Wellman  
NPS Springfield

Shaun Eyring  
NPS

Quilian Riano,  
Facilitator  
Performing Parks



**Summary** ↓

In 1989, Elizabeth Horton Sheff organized a group of parents to file a lawsuit against State of Connecticut elected officials claiming that the State allocated fewer resources to majority black/Latino areas than to areas with majority white populations. The State officials won the suit in 1995, but the decision was reversed one year later in a Supreme Court ruling that the state had an affirmative obligation to provide Connecticut’s school children with a substantially equal educational opportunity. Following the ruling, State officials created a five-year “Open Choice” integration plan that relied heavily on magnet schools. At the time of the lawsuit, 11% of the students attended integrated schools — that number is now closer to 50%. However, the non-magnet district schools that communities of color depend on have seen drops in enrollment, contributing to further losses of resources.

**Key Stakeholders** ↓

**Hartford Public School System, The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford Public Library System**

**Stories** ↓



## Access to the waterfront

Often schools and institutions want to access the waterfront around Colt Park but there are neither enough entry points nor programs to facilitate these groups. There are more programs closer to the downtown area.



## Temporal swell of activity and traffic due to schools

The increased number of magnet schools in the area closest to Coltsville National Historical Park has increased both vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the mornings and afternoons.



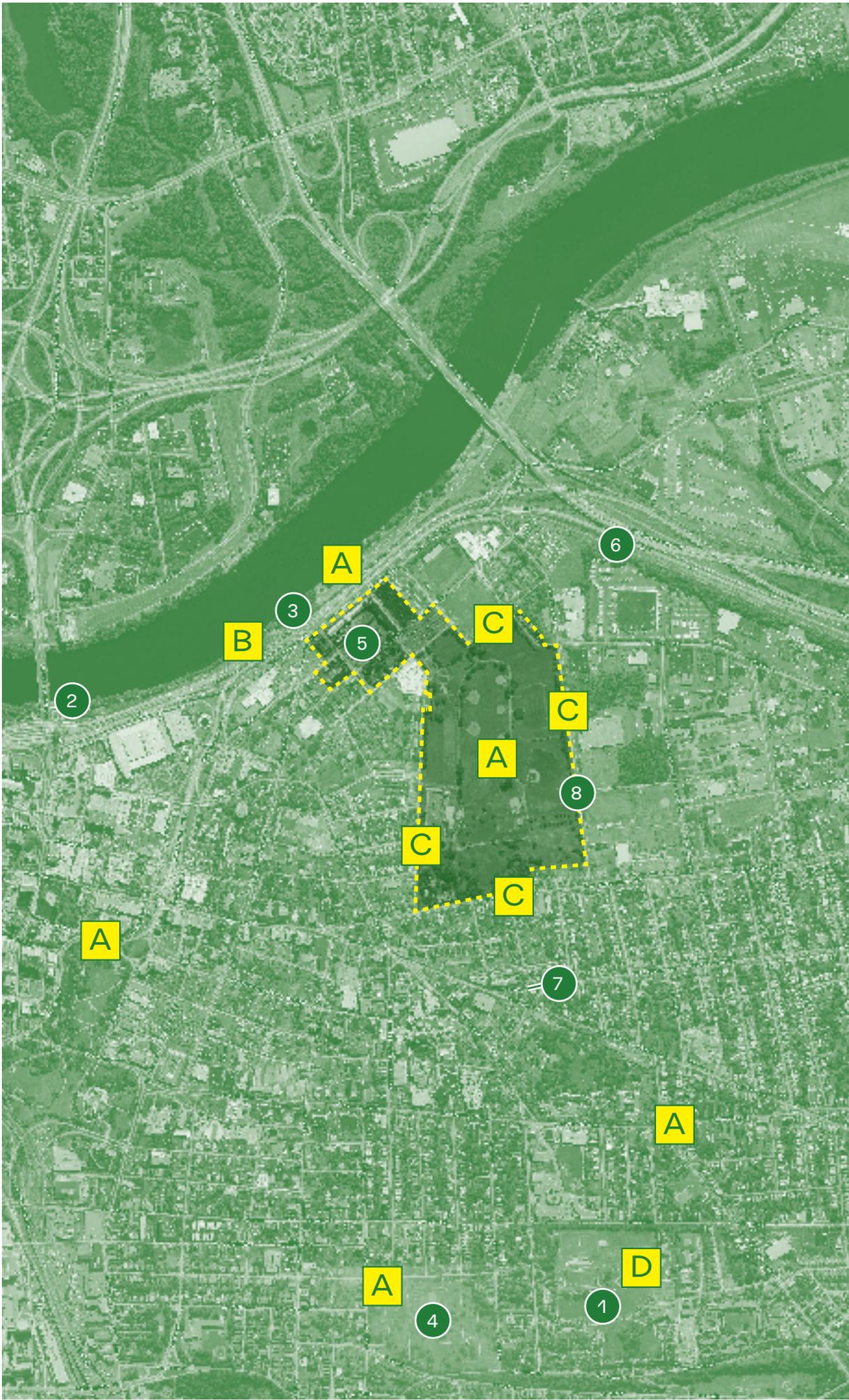
## Disconnect between institutions and local schools

The larger institutions in Hartford’s downtown, such as the Atheneum, attract a lot of visitors from the larger metro area but do not have strong connections (physical nor cultural) with the communities closest to them in the south.



## District schools losing enrollment

Since the creation of the CREC and local magnet school system, the two nearest neighborhood district schools: Bulkeley High School and Burr School, have seen decreased enrollment and thus lost resources.



Places ↓

- 1 Trinity College Campus
- 2 Current Riverfront Access
- 3 Future Riverfront Access
- 4 Overlook
- 5 Future Visitor Center
- 6 Railway used to transport waste
- 7 Franklin Avenue
- 8 Colt Park Perimeter



# Infrastructure

**People** ↓

Jackie Mandyck  
iQuilt Partnership

Tom Baptist  
Hartford Dept. of  
Public Works

Sara Bronin  
University of  
Connecticut,  
Architecture, Law

Meghan Kish  
National Park  
Service, Springfield  
Armory

April May Preston  
National Park  
Service, Springfield  
Armory



Mike Zaleski  
Riverfront  
Recapture

Liz DeWolf,  
Facilitator  
Van Alen Institute



**Summary** ↓

What infrastructure is needed to make Coltsville accessible to pedestrians and visitors? How can Coltsville be connected to the rest of Hartford through the creation of wayfinding signage, designated routes, and other improvements? Making sure that the public can access the park and the surrounding neighborhood and find rest and recreation sites with ease, is an important concern. With such close proximity to downtown Hartford, the opportunity for small infrastructural changes to enhance the Coltsville experience has great potential. “If you’re visiting Coltsville you’re visiting Hartford.”

**Key Stakeholders** ↓

**Trinity College, Real Art Ways, Riverfront Recapture, University of Connecticut, Franklin Avenue Businesses, Downtown District Parks & Institutions**

**Stories** ↓



## Hartford Hub

Many feel that Colt Park can serve the same centralized urban purpose as downtown Hartford. With the addition of a new visitor center, along with its proximity, Colt Park can become a central orientation feature of the city, and can connect to other areas of Hartford at strategic access points of the park.



## Riverfront access

Access to the riverfront is a key factor in connecting the park to the greater downtown area.



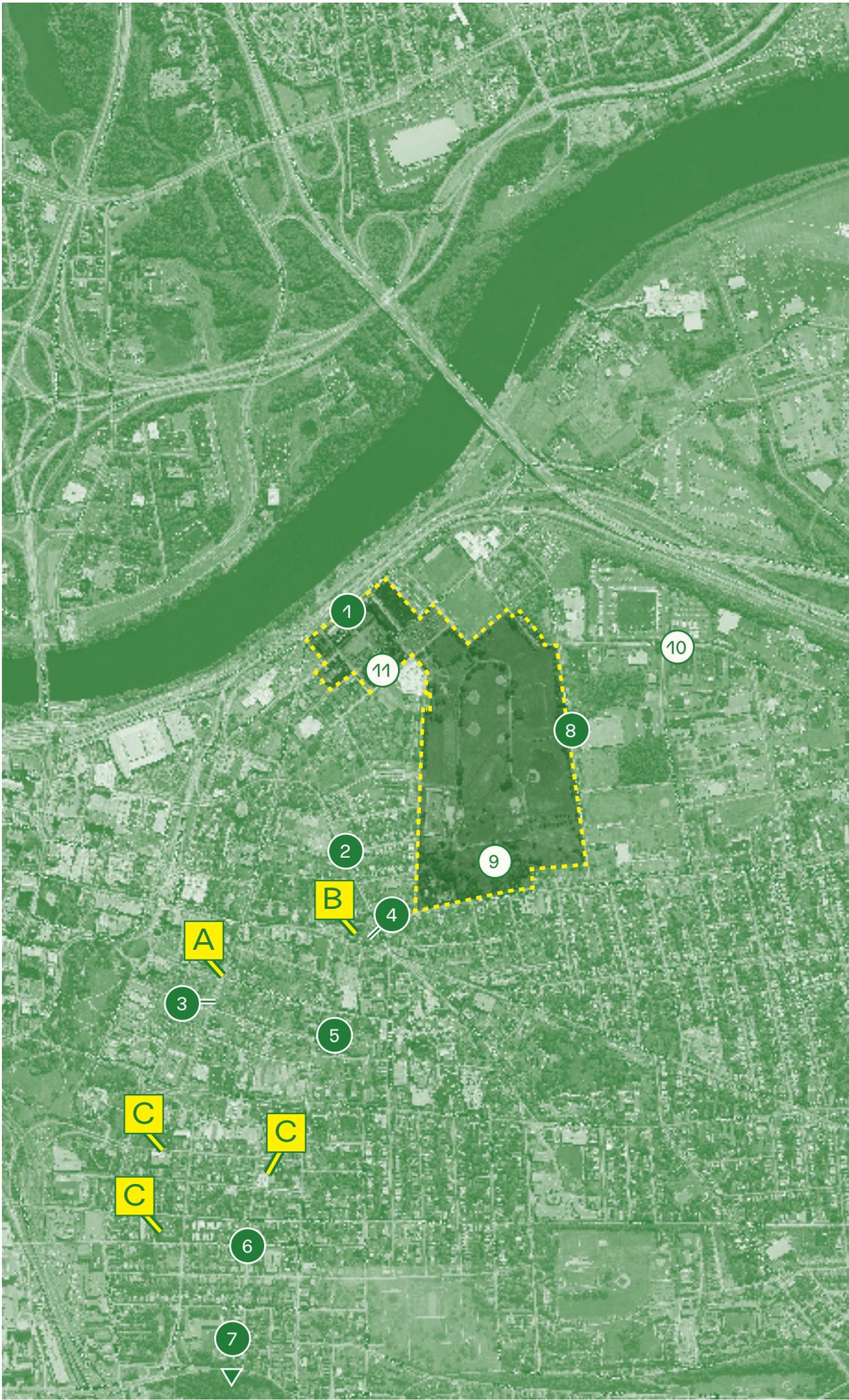
## Access and wayfinding

Removing the literal barrier to entry surrounding the park itself and creating an infrastructural loop were identified as key to access. Simple wayfinding markers about nearby neighborhood amenities and distances to downtown would also be helpful.



## Nearby institutions

The institutions surrounding the park provide an infrastructural link between each other. Connecting the park – via programming, study centers, and public space – to these institutions would be beneficial to the success of the space.



**Places ↓**

- 1 Colt Firearms Manufacturing
- 2 Capewell Horsenail Factory
- 3 'Rifle Avenue'
- 4 Barnard Park
- 5 Park Street
- 6 Frog Hollow Neighborhood
- 7 Columbia Bikes
- 8 Colt Dike

**Ideas for Places ↓**

- 9 Future Botanic Garden, Education, and Training Center
- 10 Future Incubation Hub in repurposed vacant buildings
- 11 Future Colt Innovation Center



# Innovation

**People** ↓

William Bolger  
NPS

Ryan O'Halloran  
Knox Foundation

Alex MacKenzie  
NPS, Springfield  
Armory

Caitlin Palmer  
City of Hartford

Yanil Teron  
Center for Latino  
Progress

Carol Padberg  
Hartford Art School



Annie Barrett,  
Facilitator  
Performing Parks



**Summary** ↓

The legacy of the Colt Manufacturing Company is the best-known story of Hartford's national presence as a hub of innovation. However the history of innovation, invention, and industry extends far beyond Colt's success. By linking the story and places of Colt's history to other sites in the city, future park visitors will be able to make connections across Hartford from the gateway of Colt Park to other sites where transformative ideas were developed and created.

**Key Stakeholders** ↓

**CREC Schools, Connecticut State Department of Education, Knox Bikewalk Connecticut, Connecticut Business Incubator Network, Park Street Farmers' Market**

**Stories** ↓



## 'Rifle Avenue'

Established in 1851, the Sharps Rifle Manufacturing Company was a catalyst for the development of the area along Capitol Avenue as a center for innovation and manufacturing. Machine screws, typewriters and bicycles were all produced in buildings along Rifle Avenue; the Weed Sewing Machine Company even rivaled the scale of the Colt factory.



## Barnard Park

Barnard Park sits on the edge of the Colt site. It is a small but vibrant community space that could act as a hinge between Colt park and the neighborhood. Barnard Park sponsors a weekly farmers' market and community events.



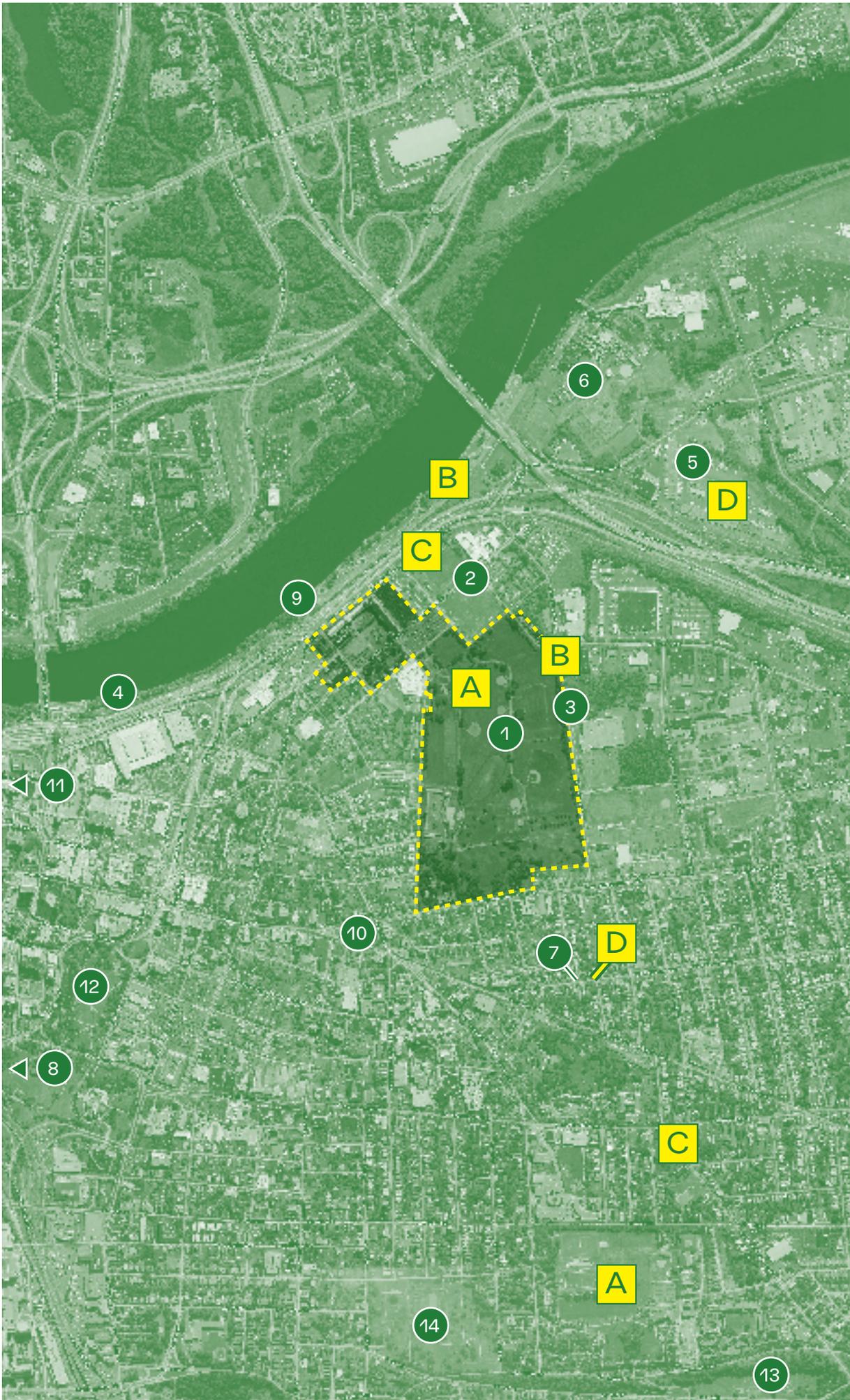
## Linking past and future innovation

Hartford's rich history as a national center of innovation and manufacturing is embedded in the numerous industrial buildings that remain. Many of these buildings near Coltsville and along the border of South Meadows offer opportunities to create future incubators for innovation and industry.



## Living with Industry

Hartford's burgeoning industries spurred invention, producing ground-breaking innovations in horseshoe nails, typewriters, and machine parts. Alongside this came community - jobs, homes, and an active city.



**Places ↓**

- 1 Colt Park
- 2 Dillon Stadium
- 3 Historic Colt Dike
- 4 Modern Dike
- 5 Farmers/Regional Market
- 6 Trash Processing Site
- 7 Little Italy
- 8 Union Station
- 9 Riverwalk and River Access
- 10 Barnard Park
- 11 Keney Park
- 12 Bushnell Park
- 13 Rocky Ridge Park
- 14 Zion Hill Cemetery



# Recreation

**People** ↓

Vera Smith-Winfrey  
City Arts on Pearl

Donna Swarr  
Park & Recreation  
Advisory  
Commission  
(PRAC), Friends of  
Colt Park

Troy Stewart  
Hartford Dept.  
of Families,  
Children, Youth and  
Recreation

Arnaldo Perez  
Hartford Dept.  
of Families,  
Children, Youth and  
Recreation



Stan Walker  
(PRAC)

Tony Cherolis  
Center for Latino  
Progress

Christine Arato  
NPS, Northeast  
Region

Jerome Chou  
Facilitator  
Van Alen Institute



**Summary** ↓

Hartford is home to a robust park system that served as a model for urban park planning across the U.S. in the early 20th century. Dillon Stadium and Colt Park, among other city parks, figure substantially into the history of sports and recreation in Hartford, and are significant sites for many current-day cultural and recreational activities as well. Local ecosystem planning – from flood-control to food ecologies – are also important issues that invoke the city’s cultural and ecological heritage.

**Key Stakeholders** ↓

**Local Children and Youth, Local High School Sports Teams, Minor League Football Teams, Friends of Colt Park, Bike Walk Connecticut, Riverfront Recapture, City Arts on Pearl, Night Fall Hartford, Center for Latino Progress, Farmers and Produce Wholesalers, Restaurant and Cafe Owners and Patrons, Hartford Dept. of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation, Park and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC)**

**Stories** ↓

**A**  
**Parks as sites of sports culture**

Hartford’s parks host sporting and recreational activities that are central to the city’s many cultural communities. Colt Park is a setting for a number of local sports, such as Vintage Baseball. Cricket, a game that is historically and culturally significant to Hartford’s West Indian community, is played in Keney Park, among other city parks.

**B**  
**Flood control**

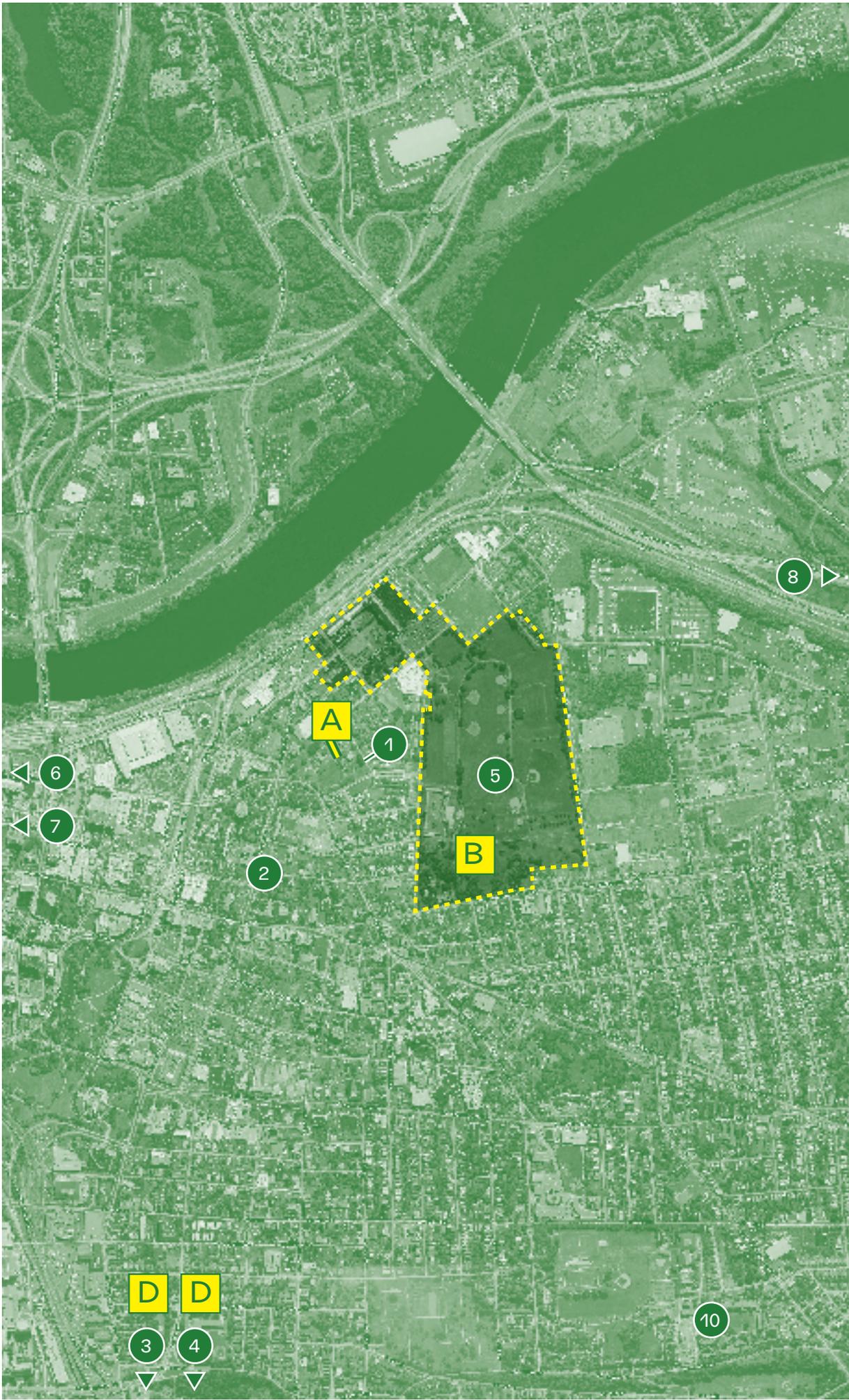
The Historic Colt Dike was built to control flooding from the rivers. Willow trees, planted to secure the dike, were also used by Colt as raw material in his “Willow Ware” furniture factory. A modern dike was built in the 1940s, but parts of the old dike still exist under Warwarme and Van Dyke Avenues.

**C**  
**Dillon Stadium**

Dillon Stadium figures prominently into Hartford’s collective memory. It has hosted local high school football games, as well as Hartford’s Minor League Baseball Teams. The stadium is considered a safe space for sporting contests between neighborhood rivalries.

**D**  
**Food and cultural Ecosystems**

Hartford’s culture of food brings the city’s communities together. Local businesses in neighborhoods such as Little Italy reflect the city’s diverse population and history. Hartford is also home to a large seasonal Farmers Market; however, it currently feels isolated from downtown residents and serves mostly car-oriented suburban clientele.



Places ↓

- 1 Parish House / Church of the Good Shepherd
- 2 Charter Oak Cultural Center
- 3 Harriet Beecher Stowe Center
- 4 Mark Twain House and Museum
- 5 Colt Park / Friends of Colt Park
- 6 Mothers United Against Violence
- 7 Hartford Communities That Care
- 8 Compass Youth Collaborative





# Perceptions of Crime

People ↓

Jack Hale  
Church of the Good Shephard

Leah Glaser  
Central Connecticut State University

Daniel Broyld  
Central Connecticut State University

John Ferrucci  
South Park Inn

Ernie Graziano  
NPS

Richard Colton  
NPS



Edd Russo  
Wadsworth Athenaeum

Sukjong Hong  
Moderator, Performing Parks



Summary ↓

The perception of crime and safety in Hartford and around the area of Coltsville Historic National Park are crucial in making Coltsville a welcoming place for all. Participants discussed how the desire to celebrate the history of Colt guns must be balanced and mindful of the contemporary discourse around guns and gun violence in Hartford. It is clear that perceptions of crime and safety are tied to broader socio-economic factors, and participants suggested ways to continue important discussions already begun by civic, community, and neighborhood leaders. Most long-term Hartford residents see neighborhood crime as more of a perception problem than a reality.

Key Stakeholders ↓

**Charter Oak Cultural Center, Coalition to Strengthen Sheldon Charter Oak Neighborhood, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Mark Twain House & Museum, Friends of Colt Park, Mothers United Against Violence, Hartford Communities That Care, Compass Youth Collaborative, Sites of Conscience**

Stories ↓

## **A** Safe discussion spaces

The Caldwell Colt Parish House of the Good Shephard was suggested as a potential venue in the area for discussions and workshops to discuss community safety, crime, and violence.

## **B** Park and local area maintenance

In the first workshop, participants who were Sheldon Charter Oak residents noted that better park maintenance of the grounds of Colt Park and more resources dedicated to park cleanliness and oversight would help to improve the feeling of safety and value in the park for all residents and visitors to enjoy.

## **C** Center for Gun Safety — proposal

A participant proposed a center for gun safety as a place to discuss and educate the public on gun safety as well as other issues related to gun use and impacts in a broader, safety-oriented approach.

## **D** Partner cultural institutions

Hartford cultural institutions, like the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center and the Mark Twain House and Museum, along with community groups like Coalition to Strengthen Sheldon Charter Oak Neighborhood, were suggested as sites where programming around gun violence, perceptions of crime, and equity could host important community discussions and spark collaboration.



# Ideas for your park



The following ideas are derived from the people, places and stories documented during the workshops. Many of the ideas can be implemented as the process of establishing the Coltsville National Historical Park moves forward.

The ideas are divided between programmatic and place-based ideas. On the left side are programmatic ideas, and on the right are place-based ideas. These are then arranged vertically from short-term to long-term ideas. Some ideas are accompanied by simple illustrations that serve as a gesture to indicate what they could begin to look like.

We present these ideas as sparks to begin a conversation with potential partners and with the National Park Service to determine need, feasibility, and steps for implementation.

The final section of this report, Next Steps, contains sample worksheets and other prompts to sketch out ideas and locate resources in more detail.

# Develop programs for children and youth



## Traveling Seeds

Lots of plants belong to Colt Park. Let's find them and see how they got here!

Seed	Wind	Animals	Water	Gravity	Plant
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					

## Invent!

So many things were invented at Coltsville. What problem would you like to solve? What is your invention? Draw it below!



Develop programming related to anti-violence initiatives such as: peace games, peace summits, conflict resolution-related programs that talk about innovating culture beyond guns.

### Citizen Science Toolkit

1. Choose a question
2. Form a team
3. Refine protocols
4. Recruit participants
5. Train participants
6. Accept data
7. Analyze data
8. Disseminate results
9. Measure effects

← ↑ **Set up a “citizen science” program for youth to observe and document the environment of Coltsville. Create opportunities to exhibit work in galleries or public spaces.**

Create youth leadership programs to coordinate and schedule summer youth programming in Colt Park. Ideas include: Open mics, temporary stages, and summer maker camps.

Create youth skills training in industrial design or industrial skills (welding, woodworking, construction, etc.)

Identify spaces in Coltsville and surrounding neighborhoods that are used for organized youth sports with signage and on a website or map.

Identify spaces to create new playgrounds within close walking proximity to existing daycare centers and youth centers nearby.

Partner with CREC regional offices and Richard J. Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts to create wayfinding system with information on area closest to Coltsville National Historical Park that students can engage with while coming or going to school.

Design and implement playground-related interactive installations emphasizing cooperation, negotiation, and collective effort, which relate to larger themes of Coltsville’s history.

# Invest in Colt Park



← **Create weekend Hartford food truck event at Armory site and park perimeter, encouraging local restauranteurs to establish outposts in Coltsville. Reach out to Park Street restaurants in Frog Hollow for inclusion in program. Locate food trucks adjacent to park entrance encourage picnicking in the park in the summer and autumn.**

With community feedback, reimagine the dome or other local symbol as a starting point to create a visual identity system for the park.

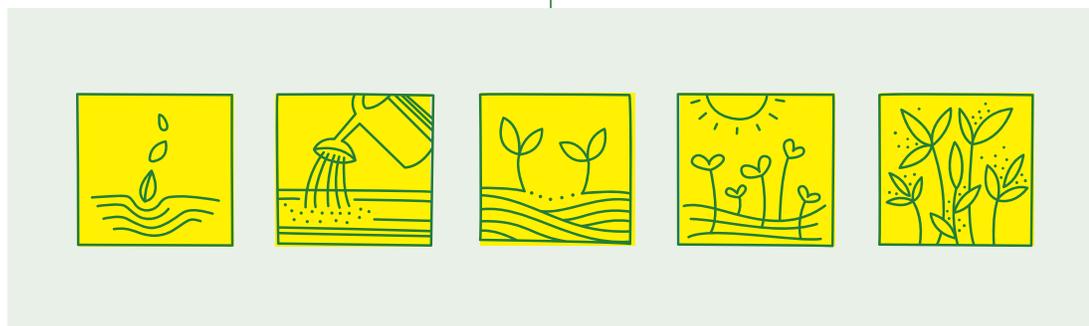
Remove the perimeter chain link fence around Colt Park or replace it with a softer boundary, creating a stronger connection between the neighborhood and the park.

Repair and maintain the Colt Statue.

Implement walkways around the perimeter of Colt Park to improve pedestrian accessibility.

Enhance existing concert area in Colt Park and add additional stage areas for concerts and artistic performances.

↓ **Integrate more gardens and greenhouses in Colt Park, referencing historic greenhouses, historic dikes, and willow trees.**



# Gather Coltsville histories and make them visible



## Collecting Colt Stories

Who in your family worked at Colt Armory?

What was their job?

Did they like work?

Establish lecture and conversation series in which local neighborhood groups and institutions closer to downtown Hartford (such as Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art and the Connecticut Old State House) come together to discuss the area’s history.

Develop a Coltsville-related set of neighborhood educational modules that talk about immigrant labor and innovation alongside the history, technology, and politics of Colt and local neighborhoods.

Develop an exhibit at Colt park about the history of the bicycle industry and innovation in Hartford

Create Women of Coltsville - Elizabeth Colt legacy program that talks about past and current women leaders in Hartford and the local neighborhood.

Develop a new program and space, “The Everyday Coltsville Archive”: Designate specific times or a location at the Visitors Center where people can bring and register their Coltsville-related objects and explain their significance.

Create programs to collect oral histories of Sheldon Charter Oak and Colt Park with District Schools Bulkeley High School and Burr School.

← **Develop programming and/or a website for an oral history collection of Colt Armory workers’ stories – a digital and/or physical booth for sharing and collecting 5 – 10 minute stories.**

Develop a flexible signage system along pedestrian paths in Colt Park to share historical information about the site.



**Develop signage outside German Potsdam houses that notes the history of skilled immigrant labor that made the site possible.**



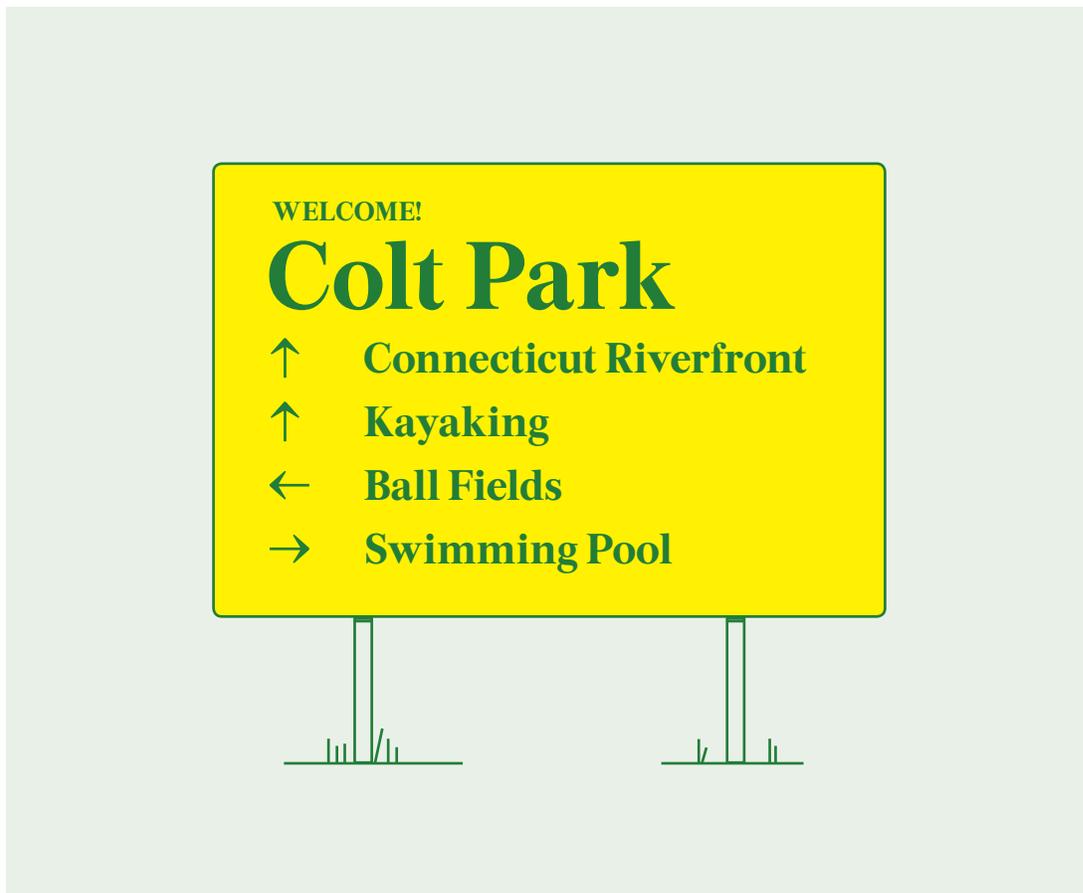
Sponsor a neighborhood mural project to depict the histories of Hartford. Develop an RFP for artists and designers, in partnership with a community organization, to locate an appropriate site in Coltsville, and create a feasibility study and proposal for mural design.

Create an app or virtual reality experience that allows users to access historic information about Coltsville and surrounding neighborhoods through personal hand-held devices; engage local schools to develop content.

Develop an exhibit about the history of innovation and invention in Hartford to take center stage in the new park buildings at the Armory.



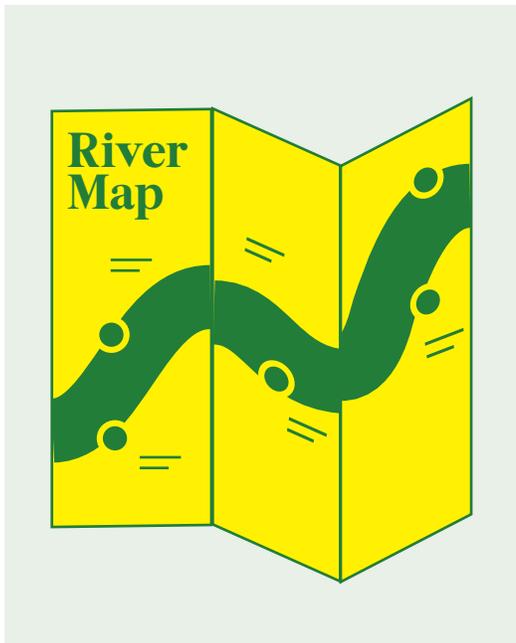
# Connect to Connecticut River



Work with Two Rivers Magnet Middle School to establish educational programming along waterfront nearest Coltsville.

Develop urban habitat interventions along the river, focusing on attracting local bird species, and partner with local birding groups.

↓ **Collaborating with local biologists, create a community mapping and documentation project to explore the ecology of the river.**

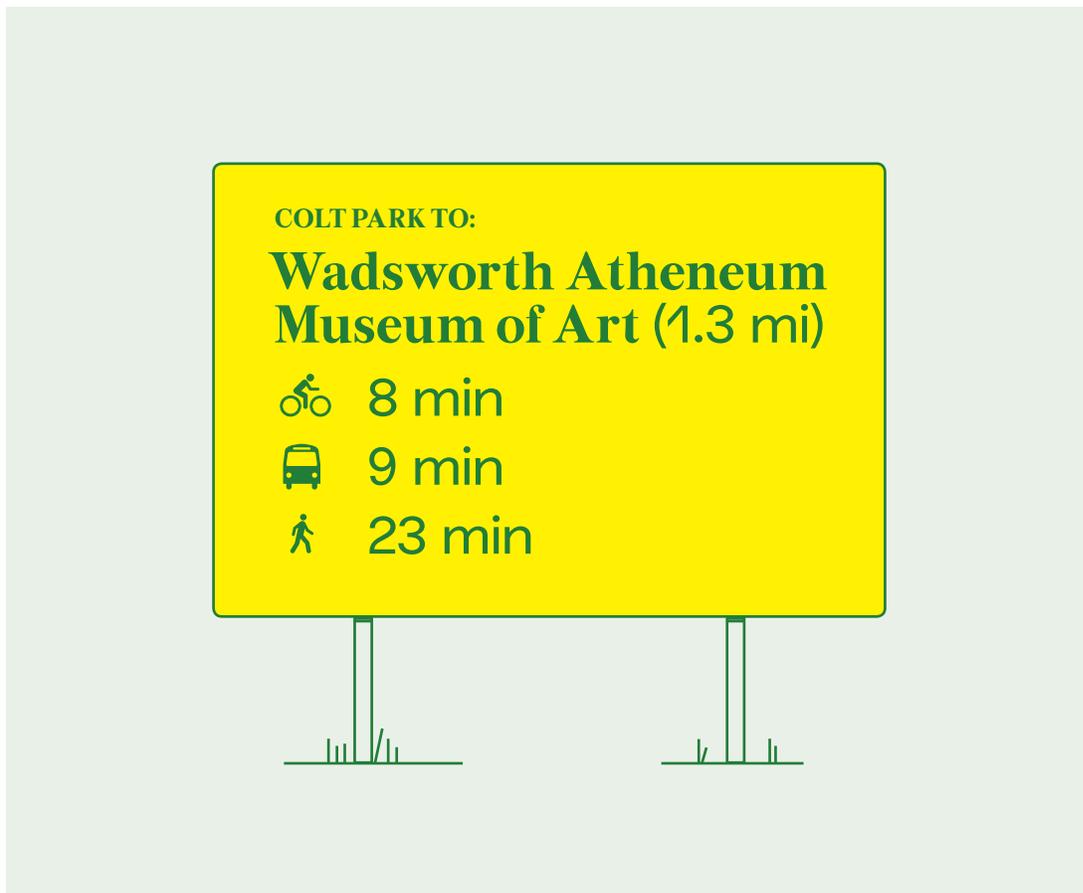


Incorporate signage and wayfinding about Coltsville and Sheldon Charter Oaks neighborhood in ongoing riverfront connection project.

← **Create clear pathways to connect the riverfront to the Coltsville park as well as to downtown Hartford.**

Enhance experience of riverwalk with urban furniture, vegetation, and other design elements.

# Healthy Coltsville: Encourage walking, biking, and sports



Map existing bike paths, and identify ways to connect them.

Work with community to connect Barnard Park and Colt Park with pedestrian activity. Develop programming and focused communications to bring more visibility to sporting activities such as Vintage Baseball and Cricket events, such as creating an enhanced web presence.

↓ **Create a bike sharing program in Hartford.**



Upgrade sidewalk design standards across the historic district and adjacent neighborhoods, upgrading the pedestrian conditions and maintenance of the streets while bringing a sense of identity and cohesiveness to the area.

← **Create signage indicating walking and biking time estimates to other amenities and places in Hartford.**

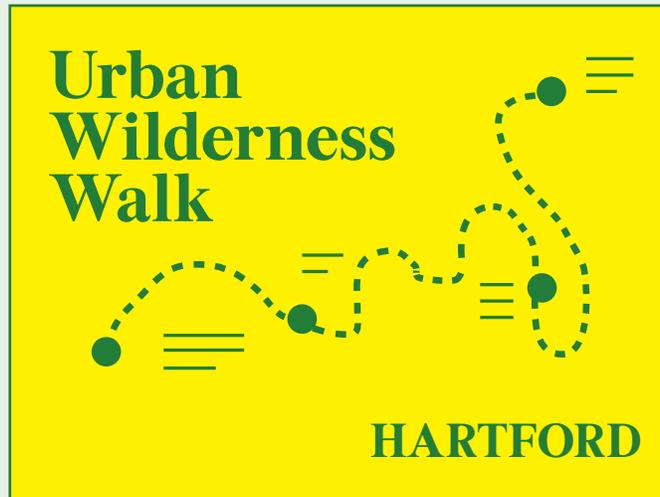
Redevelop Wawarme Avenue through lane reductions to enable inclusion of bike lanes. Create and enhance pedestrian and bicycle pathways to connect Hartford's neighborhoods, Union Station, and the park site.

Partner with community representatives and transportation experts to develop a pedestrian and bicycle loop connecting downtown, the Colt site, and the South Green, Barry Square, Frog Hollow and Sheldon Charter Oaks neighborhoods, alleviating congestion near Barnard park.

Create an RFP for the activation of the recycling and waste railroad running between Colts Armory and the Freeway to develop public access zones.

Refurbish Dillon Stadium, and establish new and enhanced programming in stadium, to provide a space for local sports enthusiasts.

# Improve job training opportunities



↓ **Develop educational program and a work-to-jobs program for new developments in Colt Park, such as a botanical garden, community garden, or greenhouses.**



↑ **Identify local businesses that could develop links to Coltsville, such as restaurants, bike rental shops, and other amenities. Create jobs programs at these sites in cooperation with NPS.**

Repurpose historic industrial buildings to create new industry incubators in the Frog Hollow neighborhood. Create educational programs between these new industries and the Colt site.

Start a manufacturing incubator or after-school center (think: Next Top Makers) inside Colt buildings, focusing on the schools surrounding the park.

Create an ongoing fellowship for artist and/or environmental residencies in the Colt Factory buildings.

← **Develop training program for community members to lead new Coltsville programming initiatives, such as urban wilderness walks, history walks, or similar.**

Develop a policy that partnership models put in contractual agreements with contractors requiring that resources be dedicated to job training and placement for Hartford residents.

# Connect Coltsville to institutions, places, and stories



## Colt Conversations

- #1 – Guns then & now
- #2 – Gun violence in Hartford
- #3 – Mark Twain’s satire against Philippine-American War
- #4 – What does community safety look like?
- #5 – Youth safety in Hartford

A conversation at  
CULTURAL INSTITUTION NAME

Partner with Trinity College's Urban Studies program and/or Environmental Science program to facilitate activities, research, and improvements.

← **Connect to 'salons' and speaking series at Harriet Beecher Stowe Center and Mark Twain House and Museum on gun violence and education.**

Connect Coltsville via programming to the planned Memorial for Victims of Gun Violence, led by Mothers Against Gun Violence.

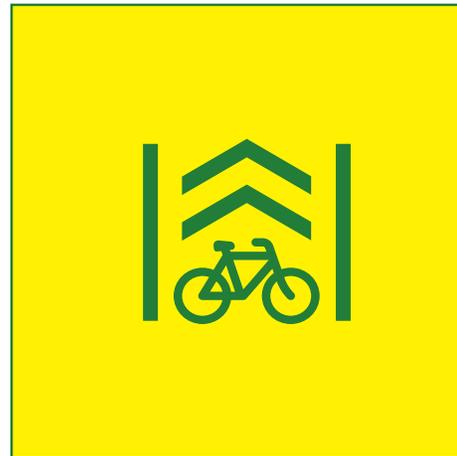
Create a free bus loop that connects the train and bus station, the future Colt gateway, and key hubs and destinations in Hartford, such as Barnard Park, the Atheneum, Trinity College, and areas in Barry Park.

Develop RFP for artists and/or designers to address undersides of highway infrastructure as an experiential part of the traversing the city.

Bolster the Little Italy neighborhood by promoting existing restaurants, cafes, and businesses as part of the cultural heritage of Hartford. Market it as a destination for park visitors to encourage them to explore Hartford beyond Coltsville.

As a public arts project, design a distributed network of iconic monuments across the city, culminating at the Colt Armory. Engage local and regional community in developing content.

↓ **Connect the Regional Market site to the park by developing pedestrian and bike paths as well as to the river.**





# Next Steps

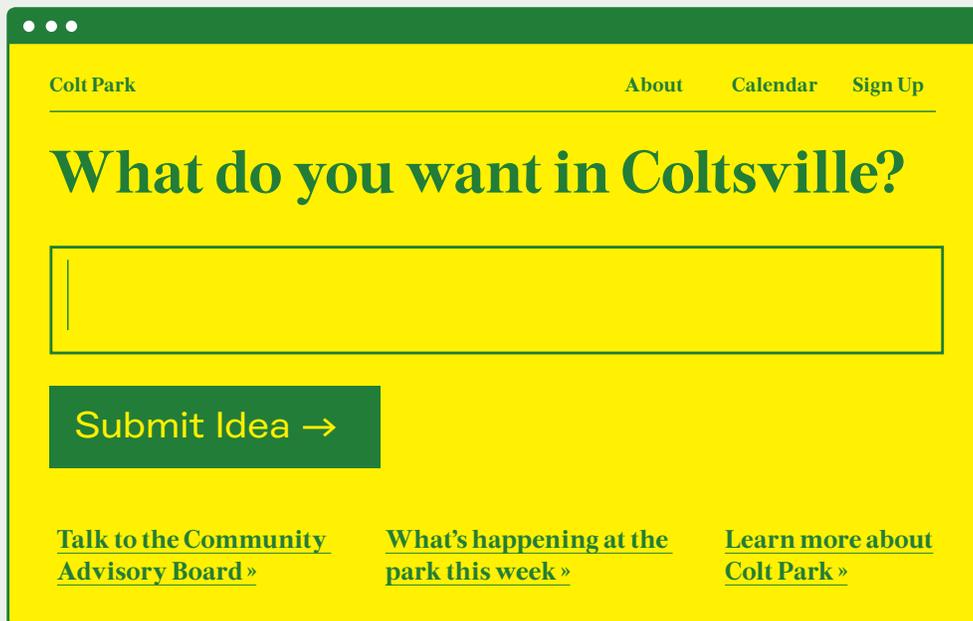


Although the two workshops yielded some potential paths to move forward, perhaps the most important idea we can encourage is how to continue a robust community engagement process. The workshops clearly demonstrated the energy and passion that exists in Sheldon Charter Oak and the surrounding Hartford area for envisioning the future national historical park. National Park Service and Coltsville National Historical Park can only benefit from an ongoing conversation with the park's future visitors and partners.

We suggest that this process of engagement continues through workshops and forums that test out the ideas presented within this report and to continue to invite more of the Hartford and regional community, as well as engage designers, artists, historians and social scientists to help facilitate discussions about the people, places and stories that have shaped Sheldon Charter Oak, Hartford, and the future Coltsville National Historical Park.

The following section shares some simplified sample frameworks to think about bringing together communities, forming working groups, and planning ways to flesh out ideas and partnerships.

# Establish processes for engaging local stakeholders in park planning



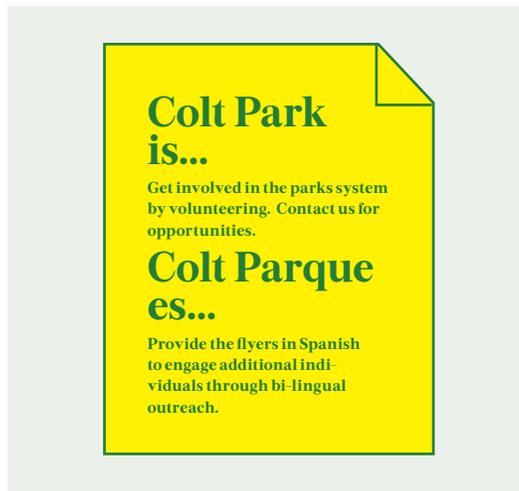
Identify and connect directly to more neighborhood groups near the park.

← **Create a website for stakeholders to contribute ideas for programming and design improvements.**

Establish a committee composed of local community members to help develop new programming ideas.

Facilitate additional ‘Mapping’ and ‘Object Stories’ exercises from Workshop 2 with new groups to gather stories and site connections.

↓ **Create and distribute a clear and accessible flyer about the Coltsville project in Spanish and in English, and distribute door-to-door in the neighborhood, at community meetings, churches and recreation centers.**



On the park website, highlight the park’s location in a thriving neighborhood with mention of significant historical sites and cultural groups.

Connect Coltsville directly with the Sheldon-Charter Oaks neighborhood in all informational materials and public communications.

Create an exhibition in the Armory building for archive of artifacts that played a key role in planning processes — for example, Objects, Headlines, and Maps could be exhibited to enable further reflection and interpretation by the public as well as NPS.



↑ **Develop adjustable and affordable temporary signage on major roads near park that indicates what kind of national park Coltsville will be – describing a partnership park, announces when park-related meetings are taking place, shares contact person and a means of getting involved. (These could be backlit LED boards, designed by an artist commissioned via RFP.)**

# Suggested Process



## 1. Assemble a facilitation team

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We recommend that a facilitation team be established to continue the process made up of an NPS representative, a local resident, the representative of a local institution and a designer. This group will schedule and create engagement processes, invite teams that are representative of the local, regional, and national stakeholders. Finally, this team will document and facilitate the production of spaces and programs.

## 2. Ideas +

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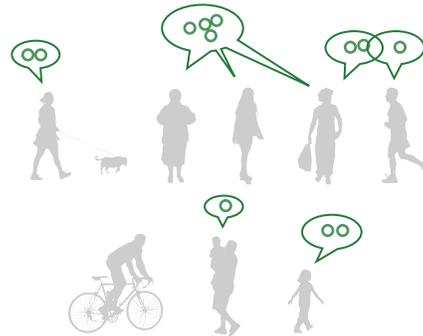
A yellow rectangular form with the title "Your Park:" at the top. Below the title is a large empty rectangular box. Underneath are four sections: "Idea" with a right-pointing arrow and a box below it; "Goal" with a right-pointing arrow and a box below it; "Steps" with four small empty boxes in a row; and "People" and "Places" each with three horizontal lines for text entry.

The facilitation team will work with a larger group of stakeholders to identify ideas for the spaces and/or programs of Coltsville National Historical Park. The ideas contained within this report can serve as examples, and new processes to come up with additional ideas could also be used.

### 3. Analyze

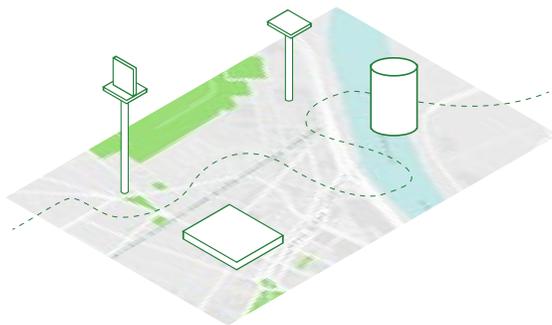
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After potential ideas for programs and spaces are identified, the facilitation team and the entire group can analyze them to create priorities. The feasibility, resources, and expertise available to bring an idea to fruition may all be considerations in the analysis.



### 4. Form working groups

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Finally, working groups form to put the idea(s) into action. The group will consider if an idea may be most effectively implemented by phasing — starting with small elements that can help the idea grow. The working groups will meet regularly and the overall process could be repeated a few times a year to ensure open communications and continuity.

# Worksheets



We have devised a few worksheets that can help stakeholders at every level parse their ideas in a way that would be most helpful when thinking about how the Parks Service can partner with local communities to achieve their goals.

This worksheet has been designed to help Coltsville National Historical Park and community engagement facilitators work with on-the-ground stakeholders choose from the program and place ideas above -- including help with step by step implementation guidelines

# Your Park:

**Title**



**Idea**

Draw a picture,  
or write it down!



**Goal**

What are  
you trying to  
achieve?



**Steps**

1.

2.

3.

4.

**People & Partners**

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---

---

**Places**

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# Worksheets



This worksheet has been designed to help you figure out what questions you want to ask Coltsville National Historical Park.

# Ask

- about planning special events
- about organizing community workshops
- about environmental resources
- about local wildlife and vegetation
- about Hartford /regional history
- about food ecology
- about business opportunities

**Main contact name:**

**Phone**

**Email**

Send this application to > [joannem\\_gangi@nps.gov](mailto:joannem_gangi@nps.gov)

Questions? Call 413.271.3973

# Worksheets



# Apply for a physical project

## Description

## Location

## Total cost & source of funding

## Committed resources, venues, partners & city officials

## Main contact name:

<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
---------------	---------------

Send this application to > [joannem\\_gangi@nps.gov](mailto:joannem_gangi@nps.gov)

Questions? Call 413.271.3973

# Worksheets



# Apply for a programming project

## Description

## Location

## Total cost & source of funding

## Committed resources, venues, partners & city officials

## Main contact name:

<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
---------------	---------------

Send this application to > [joannem\\_gangi@nps.gov](mailto:joannem_gangi@nps.gov)

Questions? Call 413.271.3973

# Resources



A growing list of resources for community members and local stakeholders to get things done in the park!

As you conceive of your ideas, think about the people, institutions and partners you can contact and whether the NPS or its partners can help make those connections.

**Coltsville Heritage Partnership**  
(the new “Friends Group” for Coltsville)  
Carol Coburn  
[c.m.coburn@hotmail.com](mailto:c.m.coburn@hotmail.com)  
860.558.6304

To enquire about being a Volunteer in the Park for Coltsville contact our NPS VIP Coordinator Joanne Gangi-Wellman at 413.271.3973 or by email at [joannem\\_gangi@nps.gov](mailto:joannem_gangi@nps.gov).

If people are specifically interested in Colt Park, one group to consider contacting is **Friends of Colt Park** Donna Swarr at [swarrds@comcast.net](mailto:swarrds@comcast.net).

**Other Resources:**





# Appendix

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# Performing Parks Team

Performing Parks is a transdisciplinary design collective composed of:

**Quilian Riano** (team leader) is an architectural and urban designer, researcher, writer, and educator.

DSGN AGNC  
dsgnagnc.com

**Adeola Enigbokan** is an artist and urbanist.

Archiving the City  
archivingthecity.com

**Annie Barrett** established Annie Barrett Studio in 2014 as a platform for architectural design, speculation, and collaboration.

anniebarrett.net

**Greg Mihalko** is a designer, artist, activist, and the founder of Partner & Partners.

partnerandpartners.com

**Joyce Hwang** is an Associate Professor of Architecture at the University at Buffalo, SUNY, and the Director of Ants of the Prairie, an office of architectural practice and research.

antsoftheprairie.com

**Sukjong Hong** is a trained urban planner and social practice artist with a focus on oral history archives and intergenerational storytelling.

sukjonghong.com

# Credits

## FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SOURCES

PAGES 3–5

[http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/wsd/Neighborhoods/Sheldon\\_Charter%20Oak%20Tour\\_2007.pdf](http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/wsd/Neighborhoods/Sheldon_Charter%20Oak%20Tour_2007.pdf)

<https://www.nps.gov/spar/upload/Precision-Valley-Symposium-05-2015.pdf>

<http://www.history.com/topics/inventions/samuel-colt>

<http://cwhf.org/inductees/arts-humanities/elizabeth-hart-jarvis-colt#.VxY-WPkrK70>

[http://www.masslive.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2016/03/coltsville\\_national\\_historical.html](http://www.masslive.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2016/03/coltsville_national_historical.html)

<http://www.livehartford.org/neighborhoods/sheldoncharteroak.aspx>

<http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Sheldon-Charter-Oak-Hartford-CT.html>

<http://connecticuthistory.org/workers-at-the-colt-armory-hartford-1867/>

<http://connecticuthistory.org/late-19th-century-immigration-in-connecticut/>

## INFORMATION ON SHELDON CHARTER OAK & COLTSVILLE

PAGES 14 - 15

“Hartford, Connecticut: Landmarks - History ~ Neighborhoods | Sheldon/Charter Oak.” Hartford, Connecticut: Landmarks - History ~ Neighborhoods | Sheldon/Charter Oak. N.p., n.d. Web. 07 Feb. 2016.

<http://hartford.oxmaxfield.com/neighborhoods/sheldonco.html>

US Census American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2010 -2014)

National Park Service, Coltsville Special Resource Study November 2009

## IMAGES

PAGE 16

Map Drawn By Katherine G. Bartholomew And Dorothy G. Spalding. Printed By The Kellogg & Bulkeley Co., 1933. / The Connecticut Historical Society, 2005.199.0.

PAGE 17

Connecticut State Library

PAGE 53

Hartford Public Schools

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford

PAGE 61

Gardening Illustrations by Agne Alesiute

PAGE 65

Outdoor dance floor, Colt Park, Hartford September 5, 1921. Held by: Connecticut Historical Society

Hartford Courant

Connecticut Dept of Agriculture

# Participants: Workshop 1

Leah Glaser	Central Connecticut State University
Bob Saunders	Capitol Region Education Council
Caitlin Palmer	City of Hartford
Edd Russo	Wadsworth Athenaeum
Mike Zaleski	Riverfront Recapture
Jack Hale	Church of the Good Shephard
Daniel Broyld	Central Connecticut State University
Bill Hosley	Terra Firma, Northeast
Carol Coburn	Coltsville Heritage Alliance
Sally Whipple	Connecticut Old State House
Ron Pitz	Knox Foundation
Tom Baptist	Hartford Department of Public Works
Xiangming Chen	Trinity College
Beth Taylor	University of Connecticut (UConn)
Michael Crosbie	University of Hartford
Troy Stewart	Hartford Dept of Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation
Arnaldo Perez	Hartford Dept of Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation
Steve Thornton	The Shoeleather History Project
Will K. Wilkins	Real Art Ways
Richard Colton	NPS
Joanne Gangi-Wellman	NPS
William Bolger	NPS
James Woolsey	NPS
Christine Arato	NPS
April May Preston	NPS
Alex MacKenzie	NPS
Shaun Eyring	NPS
Ethan McKinley	NPS
Quilian Riano	Performing Parks Team
Sukjong Hong	Performing Parks Team
Annie Barrett	Performing Parks Team
Greg Mihalko	Performing Parks Team
Adeola Enigbokan	Performing Parks Team
Joyce Hwang	Performing Parks Team



# Participants: Workshop 2

Tony Cherolis	Center for Latino Progress
Yanil Teron	Center for Latino Progress
Daniel Broyle	Central Connecticut State University
Leah Glaser	Central Connecticut State University
Jack Hale	Church of the Good Shepherd
Vera Smith-Winfrey	City Arts on Pearl
Caitlin Palmer	City of Hartford
Carol Coburn	Coltsville Heritage Partnership
Sally Whipple	Connecticut Old State House
Bernadine Silvers	CSS/CON, Metro-Hartford Alliance
Marcelina Sierra	Guakia (Parish House User)
Katherine Kane	Harriet Beecher Stowe Center
Eugene Green	Hartford African American Heritage Trail
Carol Padberg	Hartford Art School
Arnaldo Perez	Hartford Dept of Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation
Troy McKoy	Hartford Dept of Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation
Troy Stewart	Hartford Dept of Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation
Tom Baptist	Hartford Dept of Public Works
Lynn Ferrari	Historical preservation
Jackie Mandyck	iQuilt Partnership
Ken O'Brien	Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts
Ron Pitz	Knox Foundation
Ryan O'Halloran	Knox Foundation
Sara Bronin	Lawyer, professor, and architect
James Golden	Mark Twain House
Stan Walker	PRAC (Parks and Rec Advisory Commission)
Alex McKenszie	NPS, Coltsville + Springfield Armory
Ernie Graziano	NPS, Coltsville + Springfield Armory
Meghan Kish	NPS, Blackstone + New Bedford
William Bolger	NPS
James Woolsey	NPS, Coltsville + Springfield Armory
Richard Colton	NPS, Coltsville + Springfield Armory
Christine Arato	NPS, Northeast Region
Shaun Eyring	NPS, Northeast Region
April May Preston	NPS, Coltsville + Springfield Armory
Joanne Gangi-Wellman	NPS, Coltsville + Springfield Armory
Marilyn Rossetti	Open Hearth Shelter
Donna Swarr	PRAC (Parks and Rec Advisory Commission), Friends of Colt Park
Amanda Baker	Real Art Ways
Will K. Wilkins	Real Art Ways

Appendix

Mike Zaleski  
John Ferrucci  
Bill Hosley  
Steve Thornton  
Xiangming Chen  
Beth Taylor  
David Bruce  
Jerome Chou  
Liz DeWolf  
Edd Russo  
Chloe Taft  
Adeola Enigbokan  
Annie Barrett  
Quilian Riano  
Sukjong Hong

Riverfront Recapture  
South Park Inn  
Terra Firma, Northeast  
The Shoeleather History Project  
Trinity College  
University of Connecticut  
Van Alen Institute  
Van Alen Institute  
Van Alen Institute  
Wadsworth Athenaeum  
Yale University  
Performing Parks Team  
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